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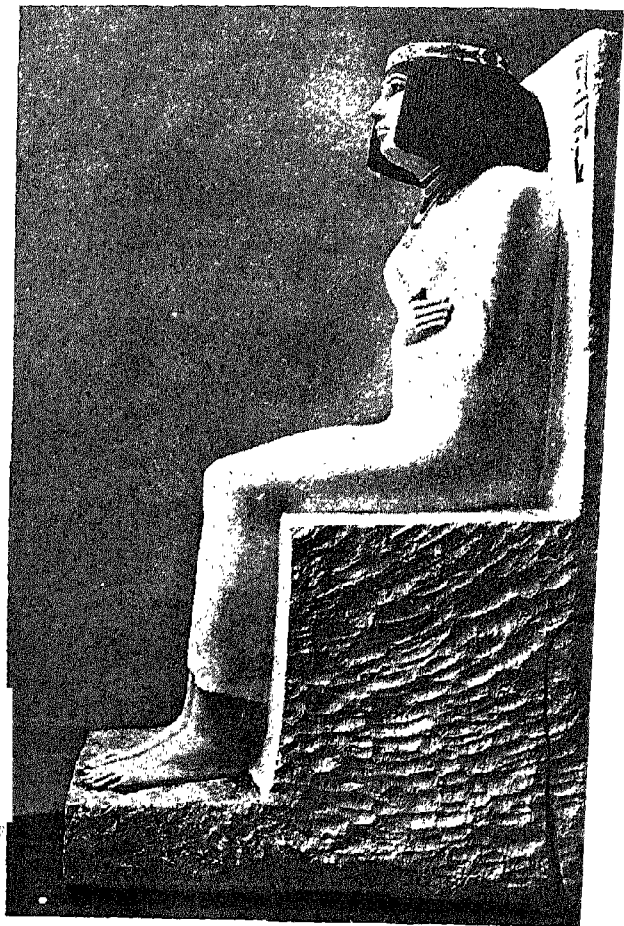
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BRIEF HISTORY  
OF  
ANCIENT EGYPT

BY

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## EDITORS' PREFACE

*This book is intended to give the reader a brief and easy account of Ancient Egyptian History. The authors have tried to include in this history much of the customs, beliefs, arts, industries and organisation of Ancient Egypt. It deals with the history of Ancient Egypt from the very early times till the end of the Ptolemaic Period. Zaky Iskander is specially responsible for the redaction of the part dealing with the history from the earliest times till the end of the Saïic Period, while Alexander Badawy has prepared the Ptolemaic chapters and the tracings for the illustrations.*

*We wish to thank Mr. D.C. Butcher and Mr. K.R. Hayward of the English Mission College, Cairo, who thought of giving the students of the College a course on Egyptian history for which this book was priorly edited.*

*We also thank Mr. Butcher for correcting the English of the Second Edition.*

*Thanks also to Mr. J. Leibovitch who kindly furnished the book with many of its pictures and which are mostly reproduced from his book "Ancient Egypt".*

**The Authors**



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## INTRODUCTION

Many remains of a primitive civilisation are to be met with in Egypt. Stone implements give us grounds for believing that from the time when man used a stone axe, roughly hewn, to that when he had learned to make the polished flint daggers of the Neolithic Period, this country was continuously inhabited.

It is impossible to specify the exact proportions in which African, Asiatic and perhaps even European elements contributed to form the population which developed into the Egyptian race, but once these Ancient Egyptians were in the country, the conditions of life and climate helped them to found one of the oldest centres of civilisation in the ancient world. It seems that among the factors which helped in achieving the prosperity and the continuous evolution of civilisation in Ancient Egypt are:

1. — A pleasant climate which is quite suitable for animal life and plant growth.
2. — The fertility of the Nile Valley.
3. — Abundance of water, especially at the time of the annual inundation,

4. — The growth of nearly all the cereals and vegetables necessary for man in the Nile Valley.
5. — The presence of the Eastern and Western Deserts on both sides of the Nile Valley, which protected it from the invasions of the neighbouring nations.
6. — The geographical situation of Egypt, between Africa and Asia and very close to Europe.

PART I

EGYPT TILL END OF THE  
SAITIC PERIOD



## SOURCES OF ANCIENT EGYPTIAN HISTORY

The sources of Ancient Egyptian history are either documentary or classical.

### **A. — The documentary sources :**

These include tables giving the names of the kings, written in order, and the many inscribed monuments found everywhere in Egypt. The most important tables are the following :

1. — *Palermo Stone* : This gave a list of the kings of Upper, Lower and United Egypt from before the First Dynasty until the middle of the Fifth Dynasty, together with the important events or annals, including the height of the Nile, year by year.
2. — *List of Saqqara* : This gives the names of 47 kings ending with Rameses II.
3. — *Turin Papyrus* : This papyrus contains a list of kings ending with those of the Nineteenth Dynasty, the number of years of the reign of each king, and summaries at the end of certain periods.



4. — *List of Abydos* : In the temple of Seti I, a table on the walls gives the names of 76 kings beginning with Menes, the founder of the First Dynasty, and ending with Seti I., the third king of the Nineteenth Dynasty.

5. — *List of Karnak* : This is now in Paris, and it originally gave the names of 62 kings.

## **B. — The Classical Sources :**

Many books on Egypt were compiled by ancient writers the most important of whom are :

1. — *Herodotus* : A Greek historian who visited Egypt about 450 B.C. and wandered all over the country, asking the priests about its history and religion. He devoted the second volume of his "Histories" to Egypt. He, however, added some personal observations and allowed in his book for many inaccuracies.

2. — *Manetho*, an Egyptian priest of the Ptolemaic Period (about 300 B.C.) originally from Samannud. He wrote in Greek by order of king Ptolemy, three "Egyptian Memoirs" in which he grouped the kings, from Menes to Nectanebo II, into 30 dynasties which correspond to the various royal houses that ruled Egypt successively. Manetho's works are lost, but fragments of them have been preserved by Josephus, Eusebius and others. Eusebius gives a list of the Egyptian Dynasties, stating the length of reign of every king.

## THE PERIODS OF EGYPTIAN HISTORY

For convenience, Ancient Egyptian History has been divided into a number of main periods which can be summarized as follows :

Period	Date
1. — <i>Dawn of Predynastic Period</i>	undated
2. — <i>Predynastic Period</i>	ended about 3200 B.C.
3. — <i>Dynastic Period</i>	3200 B.C. to 332 B.C.
4. — <i>Greek (or Ptolemaic) Period</i>	332 B.C. to 30 B.C.
5. — <i>Roman Period</i>	30 B.C. to 640 A.D.

We shall deal with every one of these periods separately but it must be noted that there was never any clear-cut line of demarcation, and customs overlapped from one age to another, through a continuous evolution.

### DAWN OF THE PREDYNASTIC PERIOD

This period includes both the *Paleolithic* and the *Neolithic* Periods.

### 1.) **The Paleolithic Period :**

This period is also called the "*age of chipped stone*", during which man, still ignorant of metal, made for himself implements of hard stone, preferably of flint, untold numbers of which have been found all over the country. During this period, the duration of which cannot be defined with any certainty but which possibly continued for many thousands of years, there was copious rainfall all over Egypt and the present desert was forest and grassland, over which wandered herds of wild animals. The Nile, much larger than now, was flowing between the Arabic and Libyan ranges of mountains. Neither the habitations, nor the grave of these people, if they used either, have been discovered, and all that remains of them are the large numbers of characteristic flint weapons and implements, with which they could hunt and fight. The paleolithic man in Egypt, as in all the other inhabited parts of the world at that time, must have been essentially a *hunter*, depending largely for food upon the animals he killed, supplemented by certain fruits, seeds and roots he found growing wild. He was, therefore, a wanderer and a food gatherer.

### 2.) **The Neolithic Period :**

Also called the "*age of polished stone*", owing to the fact that the inhabitants, at that time, had improved their tools and weapons, polished their surfaces and

shaped their axes and arrow-heads with great skill. During this period, the rainfall gradually became less and the land, at a distance from the valley, gradually dried up into desert. This drying up forced the inhabitants to live nearer to the Nile Valley which was very near to what it is now and the Fayum lake, and there, *agriculture* was discovered, that is to say, some one found out that a constant supply of grain (barley and wheat) which they had been accustomed to gather from wild crops, and which sometimes failed, might be assured by sowing. Agriculture, however, anchors man to one locality and makes a permanent hunting life unnecessary.

When some of the inhabitants settled in one place, needs would arise that were not felt before and had to be satisfied. Thus shelters from the weather would be built, wicker work baskets and earthenware or stone pots would be made as containers for grain and water respectively, sleeping mats would be plaited, cloth would be woven, food would be cooked and animals would be tamed, and others *bred*, in order to secure a constant supply of meat and skin. All these needs necessitated the invention of some of the primitive *industries* such as making and shaping pottery, and tanning leather.

This Neolithic existence, steadily and slowly improving all the time, continued for several thousands of years and gradually and automatically developed towards a higher civilization when *metals* became known and used.

### THE PREDYNASTIC PERIOD

The term "Predynastic Period" is used for all the ages of which we have settlements or cemeteries prior to the First Dynasty. It is during this period, which ended at about 3200 B.C., that metals were discovered and used. The first to be used were gold, silver and copper, all three of which occur naturally in the country, gold and silver in the metallic state, and copper as an ore.

The Egyptians had then also discovered that the solar year consisted of 365 days approximately and it seems likely that the *calendar* was introduced in 4241 B.C.

The inhabitants lived in reed, wattle and daub huts nearer the Nile river than those of the previous period owing to the fact that rainfall had diminished and the swamps near the river had almost wholly disappeared as a results of the alluvial deposits of Nile clay for thousands of years.

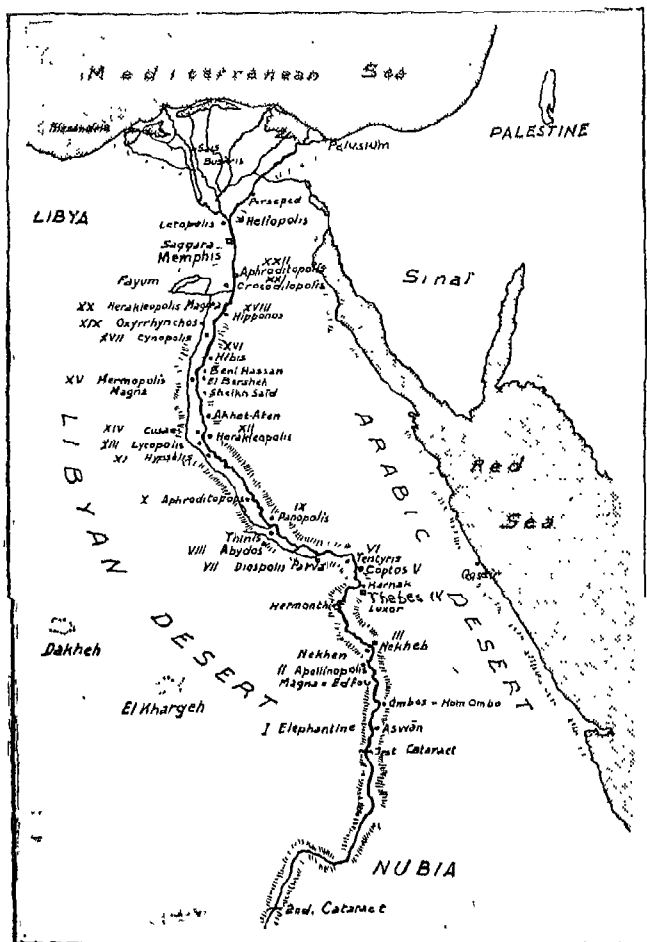
The Predynastic Egyptians were *herdsmen*, keeping goats and cattle, and *agriculturers*, growing emmer wheat, millet and barley. They wore both linen and skin garments, and adorned themselves with beads of gold, faience and hard precious or semi-precious stones. Elaborate ivory combs were worn in the hair, and the eyes were outlined in green paint, which was ground on stone palettes cut and polished in the forms of

fish and other animals. They were also great *hunters*, especially of hippopotami and elephants, which were valued for their ivory.

It is surprising to what an extent *trade* had developed at this early period; thus the lapis-lazuli stone and coniferous wood must have come from Asia. There is evidence that the Qift-Quseir route to the Red Sea was also known.

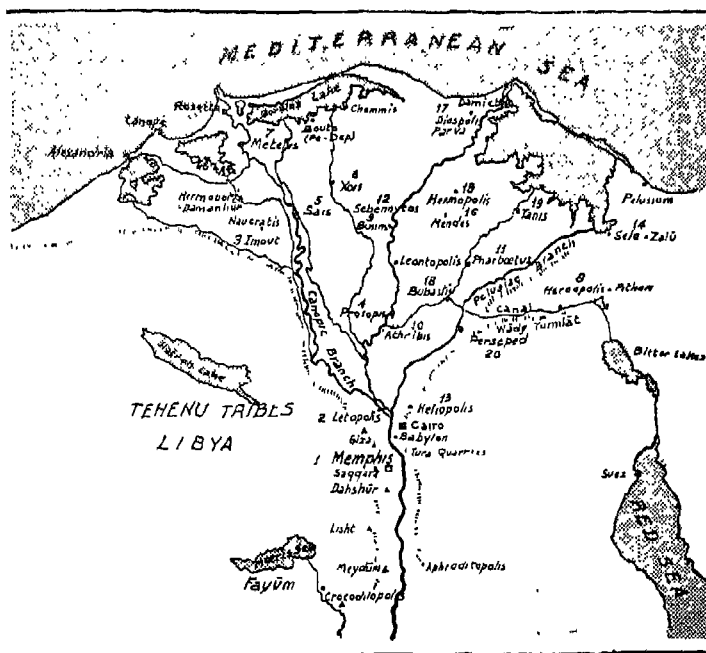
The Predynastic Egyptians buried their dead in a crouched position, suggesting natural sleep, and with them were placed their possessions and food, so that their spirit which was thought to live in the tomb should not lack the necessities of life. Of their religious conceptions little is known, but it can be inferred that many of the animal-headed gods of later times were derived from the gods of the various Predynastic tribes.

Towards the end of this period, Egypt was divided into two kingdoms, *Upper* and *Lower* Egypt. Upper Egypt extended from the Fayum in the north to Asswan in the south while Lower Egypt consisted of Memphis and the Delta. Each of these two kingdoms was subdivided into a number of provinces which the Greek historians called "*nomes*" and which must have been originally the small independent principalities of the earlier periods. The nome was governed by an official appointed by the crown. It had its own god, flag and capital. In the historic period we know of twenty-two nomes for Upper Egypt (*map* I) and twenty for Lower Egypt (*map* II).



Map. 1.—Egypt giving the nomes of the Upper Country.  
(Numbered in Roman.)

In very early times the capital of Upper Egypt was *Ombos* (Kom Ombo) where the chief deity was the god *Sêth*; its crown, the *white crown* and its symbol, the *lotus plant*. The capital of Lower Egypt was *Behdet*



Map. 11 — Lower Egypt and its nomes.



(Damanhour); its chief god *Horus*; its crown the *red crown* and its symbol, the *papyrus* plant.

At a later period *Nekhen* or Hieraconpolis (near Edfu) became the capital of Upper Egypt while *Buto* (near Dessuk) became the capital of Lower Egypt. The vulture-goddess (*Nekhbet*) and the serpent-goddess (*Wadjet*) became the respective deities of the two capitals.

## THE DYNASTIC PERIOD

(3200 - 332 B.C.)

Manetho's arrangement has been adopted by modern historians, who also divide the Dynastic Period into the following kingdoms or periods :

1.) **The Old Kingdom** which includes the first six dynasties and is subdivided into :

A. — The Archaic Period which covers the first two Dynasties (3200 - 2778 B.C.)

B. — The Pyramid Period extending from the Dynasties IIIrd to VIth (2778-2270 ? B.C.)

2.) **The First Intermediate Period** which includes the dynasties from the VIth to the Xth and a part of the Eleventh Dynasty 2270 ?-2060 B.C.).

3.) **The Middle Kingdom.** This includes the second part of the Eleventh Dynasty and the Twelfth Dynasty (2060 - 1785 B.C.).

4.) **The Second Intermediate Period.** Extending from the XIIIth to XVIIth Dynasty (1785 - 1580 B.C.).

5.) **The New Kingdom** (*the Empire*). From the XVIIIth to the XXth Dynasty (1580 - 1085 B.C.).

6.) **The Decadence Period.** From the XXIst to the XXIVth Dynasty (1085 - 751 B.C.).

7.) **The Late Egyptian Period.** From the XXVth to the XXXth Dynasty (751 - 332 B.C.).

## THE ARCHAIC PERIOD

### **The First Dynasty** (3200-2980 B.C.).

Both classical sources: Herodotus, Manetho and Egyptian monuments: tablet of Abydos and others mention the first king of the First Dynasty as Menes. Attempts have been made to identify Menes with Na'rmer or with 'Aha whose names were found separately with Menes' name on some of the contemporary monuments. If Menes is identified with Na'rmer, as it is more likely, then Na'rmer's famous palette (*fig. 1*) confirms his conquest of Lower Egypt and the union of the two kingdoms under him. He is shown, on this palette, wearing the white crown of Upper and the red crown of Lower Egypt and thus inaugurated the Old Kingdom.

Menes' native city was Thinis (near Abydos), which was not near enough to the centre of his new kingdom to serve as his capital. He, therefore, founded Memphis,

at the junction of the two lands, to be his new capital. We can easily credit the narrative of Herodotus that he built a great dam, diverting the course of the Nile

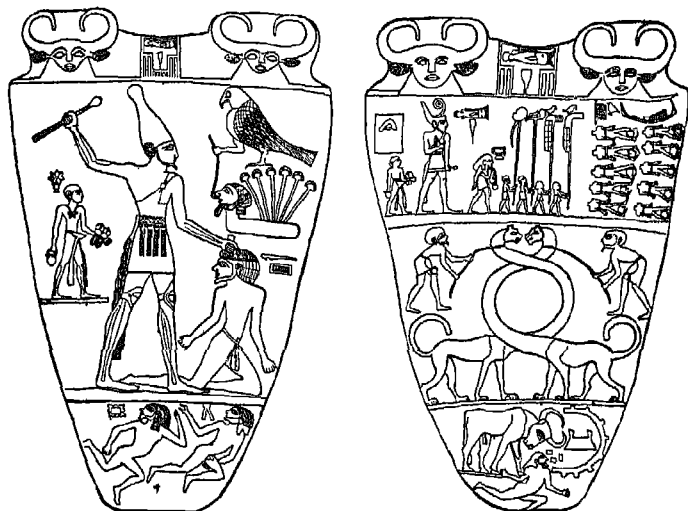


Fig. 1.—Narmer's palette (Ist Dyn.), Cairo Museum No. 3055

above the site of Memphis that he might gain room there for his new capital. Historians ascribed to him also the introduction into Egypt of a highly developed system of centralised government and the writing down of the laws.

After Menes, about seven other powerful kings reigned over Egypt successively. These kings are 'Aha', Djer,

Djet, Den, Adjib Semerkhet and Qa'

Tombs containing the names of these kings have been found at Abydos. Their names were also given by some other monuments from both Saqqara and Abydos. From these inscriptions we know that they sent expeditions to work the

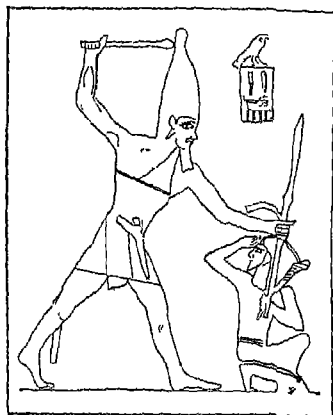


Fig. 2.—Relief showing king Semerkhet punishing an Asiatic (Ist.) Dyn.), Sinai.

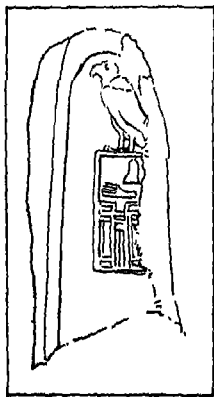


Fig. 3.—Funerary stela of King Qa' (Ist Dyn.).

mines and quarries in Sinai and the Eastern desert to bring the metals and the different stones. They also conquered the Nubians, thus adding territory to the southern part of Egypt, and they carried out warlike expeditions against the Lybians.

### **The Second Dynasty**

(2990 - 2778 B.C.).

More than six kings are known

to have reigned over the united Egypt during this Dynasty, but unfortunately very little is known about them since their monuments, so far discovered, are very few in number. The first king of this Dynasty is *Hetep-sekhemwi*. In his time a disastrous earthquake is said to have occurred in Lower Egypt, near Tell-Basta. His name denotes that the two powers of Upper and Lower Egypt (Seth and Horus) were in peace. The last king of this Dynasty is *Kha'-sekhemwi*, whose tomb was found at Abydos. This tomb contains 56 rooms in which were stored many of the needs of his "ka" (vital spirit). His burial chamber was all of



Fig. 4.—Statue of King Khaesekhemwi (11<sup>ind.</sup> Dyn.)

limestone and is one of the oldest stone underground buildings discovered in Egypt. His wife, Ne-Maat-hap, was the mother of king Djoser (or Zoser), the founder of the Third Dynasty.

**Civilisation During the Archaic Period ;**

**BURIAL CUSTOMS.** — In the Archaic Period burial customs developed considerably. The tombs are now elaborate structures, both above and below ground, for members of the royal family and for high officials. Great "*mastabas*" or superstructures of crude brick were erected above the various chambers. The burial chamber as a rule, stood in the centre with a number of magazines all round it. Sometimes others above in the brick mastaba formed a second storey. The bodies were buried, more or less contracted, in wooden coffins for the rich or receptacles of clay, pottery, basketwork, or hides of animals for the poor.

The numerous objects found belonging to this period, viz: amulets of hard stones; bracelets of flint, slate, ivory, bone, horn and shell; cylinder-seals of carnelian, chalcedony and wood plated with gold; heads of different forms and materials; pottery jars containing cheese, fat, wine and beer; stone vessels beautifully made; slate palettes; copper saws, adzes and chisels; games of marble, ivory and bones; sickles and knives of flint etc., show great progress in art and industry and display a wonderful mastery over difficult materials and great evolution in customs and mode of living.

**WRITING :** The earliest inscriptions found in Ancient Egypt are some names in hieroglyphs written in black pigment on pottery vases of the late Predynastic Period and of the First Dynasty. By the First Dynasty,

names and short texts are found on ivory and wooden tablets, on stone cylinders used as seals, and on vases. This infers that they knew writing in the Predynastic Period and that it greatly developed in the Archaic Period, reaching its full evolution in the succeeding period.

Even since the First Dynasty the Egyptians used two scripts: one decorative, the signs being little figures carefully drawn, known as "*hieroglyphic*"; the other cursive, known as "*hieratic*" and mostly used for writing on papyrus. The hieratic signs are merely abridged hieroglyphs. From about the Twenty-fourth Dynasty, and specially during the Ptolemaic Period, a third script, the "*demotic*", was used. This was a further simplification of the hieratic and served to transcribe the popular tongue.

When the Egyptians became Christians, they abandoned the three ancient scripts and adopted the much easier Greek alphabet, with the addition of seven signs kept to represent sounds unknown in Greek. Even towards the end of the fourth century A.D., people had forgotten how to read hieroglyphs. Coptic language, which is the Egyptian one at its latest stage borrowed some Greek words and ceased in its turn to be used as the common tongue and made way for Arabic. From the sixteenth century onwards, it has been used only in the liturgy of the Coptic Church.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, Champollion succeeded in deciphering the Ancient Egyptian language by studying a single text found written in



hieroglyphs, demotic and Greek on the "*Rosetta Stone*". It had been observed that the names of kings and queens were written in "cartouches" or elliptical frames

Champollion undertook a methodical study of these cartouches containing the names which could be known by comparison with the Greek text, and, as early as 1822, fixed an alphabet of about 15 characters. Carrying on his studies, he was able, in 1824, to translate a few phrases, and before he died (in 1832) he had succeeded in preparing a grammar and dictionary of the Egyptian language.

GOVERNMENT: There is evidence that a high official acted as prime minister (*t't*), another as minister of public works (*'d mr*) and another called "bearer of the seal of the king" (*htm bit*). Although the names of the other officials of this period have not yet been found, yet from the existence of the officials mentioned above, one may infer that government was already well developed.

### THE PYRAMID PERIOD

This is the age of the great pyramids and mastabas, when the kings ruled from Memphis, and extends over the period from the IIIrd to the VIth Dynasty.

**The Third Dynasty (2778-2723? B.C.).**

The most important king of this Dynasty is its founder, *Djoser*, which means "the Powerful". As mentioned before, he was the son of Queen Ne-Maat-Hap, the wife of Kha'-sekhemwi. This shows that the change of the dynasty was not due to a change of the royal family, but was merely for honouring King Djoser, who was a member of the same family. He reigned for 29 years and he built for himself two tombs. The first one is a huge mastaba of brick at Beit-Khallaf, north of Abydos. The second is his famous Step Pyramid at Saqqara which is the oldest pyramid yet discovered and the earliest large structure of stone in the whole world.

This step pyramid is considered, as to its external form, the intermediate stage of evolution between the mastaba and the real pyramid. Around this pyramid he built a great enclosure wall of limestone, measuring 550 metres by 280 metres. In between this enclosure wall and the pyramid, he erected his funerary temple and many other buildings which show a sudden and amazing progress in architecture in his time. This great progress is certainly to be attributed to his famous minister *Imhotep* who must have been a supreme genius, one of the few Egypt ever produced. Imhotep had a great reputation in wisdom, magic, medicine and architecture. In later times he was deified at Memphis

as the son of Ptah, the Artificer, and identified by the Greeks with *Asclépius*, the god of medicine.

Djoser extended the frontier of Egypt in the South and continued exploitation of the copper mines in Sinaï. According to the legend related upon the "Stela of the Famine", on the island of Soheil in the region of the First Cataract, a famine came upon Egypt in his time and Imhotep advised him to present the offerings to god Khnum, the god of the First Cataract, which was considered to be the source of the Nile. Consequently the Nile supplied again its regular water in abundance.

The last king of this dynasty is *Huni*, the father of the Queen Hetep-heres.

**The Fourth Dynasty** (2723 - 2563 B.C.).

The kings of this dynasty are the following:

- |                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 — Snefru           |                      |
| 2 — Khufu            | ( <i>Cheops</i> )    |
| 3 — Dedefre'         |                      |
| 4 — Khafre'          | ( <i>Chephren</i> )  |
| 5 — Hordedef         |                      |
| 6 — Ba-ef-re'        |                      |
| 7 — Menkaure'        | ( <i>Mycerinus</i> ) |
| 8 — Shepseskaf       |                      |
| 9 — Queen Khentkawes |                      |

They are famous for their huge pyramids and temples which indicate that the government was very powerful and well organised during this dynasty.

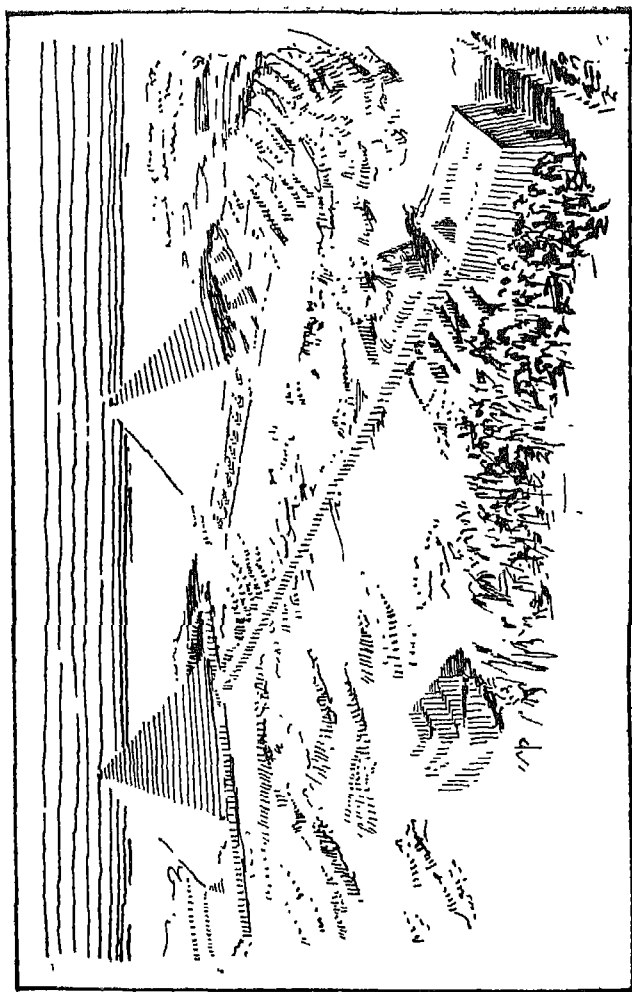


Fig. 5.—A restored bird's eye view of the Giza plateau (IVth. Dynasty.)

**SNEFRU:** He built for himself two pyramids, one at Dahshûr and the other at Meidum. The so-called Rhomboidal Pyramid at Dahshûr has been recently identified to be a third pyramid belonging also to him. As recorded on the Palermo Stone, he sent a navy of 40 ships to Lebanon to fetch cedar wood. The tomb of his wife *Hetepheres* was discovered in 1925 and her excellent monuments are exhibited in the Egyptian Museum.

**KHUFU:** His name was discovered written on the rocks of Sinai, from which copper was extracted.

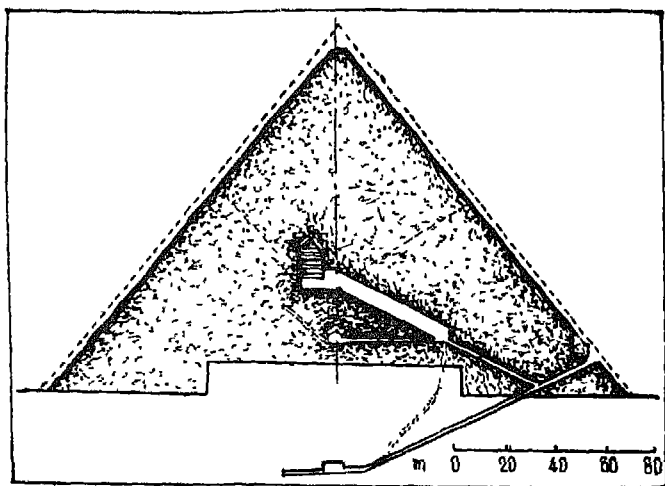


Fig. 6.—Section showing the interior of Khufu's Pyramid (IVth Dynasty), Giza.

He built for himself the Great Pyramid at Giza where he was buried. This pyramid (*fig. 6*), the biggest of all, was justly reckoned as one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world. Its base is square, each side measuring 230 metres and its height is now 137 metres, but it was originally 145 metres. His sarcophagus was found empty in the king's chamber of this pyramid and his body was missing. Attached to each pyramid were its "funerary temple" on the east side and another temple or "vestibule" in the valley, both being connected by a covered inclined causeway. The temples belonging to Khufu's Pyramid have not yet been excavated. Khufu built small pyramids for his wives to the south of his pyramid.

DEDEFRE': He reigned for 8 years only and built his pyramid at Abu-Rawash.

KHAFRE': He is the builder of the Second Pyramid at Giza. His funerary and valley temples were discovered on the east side of the pyramid, connected by a causeway about 600 metres long. In these temples many of Khafre's beautiful statues were found and some of them are now in the Egyptian Museum (*fig. 7*). The Sphinx was most probably built during his reign. It represents *Hor-akhty* or "Horus on the horizon". It has the head of a man (resembling Khafre') and the body of a lion, so as to represent mental faculties and bodily power.

HORDEDEF & BA-EF-RE': Their names only have been discovered in 1949 by F. Debono on the schist rocks at Wadi-El-Hammamat.

**MENKAURF**: He built the Third Pyramid at Giza.



Fig. 7.—Statue of King Khafre  
(IVth. Dyna). Cairo  
Museum No. 139

His body was discovered in his basalt sarcophagus inside the pyramid. Unfortunately, the sarcophagus was lost when the ship which was transporting it to England foundered off at the coast of Spain, but the remains of the body were saved and are now in the British Museum.

**SHEPSESKAF**: He did not build a pyramid for himself, but a huge mastaba at Saqqara, known as *Mastabet Faraon*.

It seems that Shepseskaf had no son to succeed him on the throne and thus his sister *Khentkawes*,

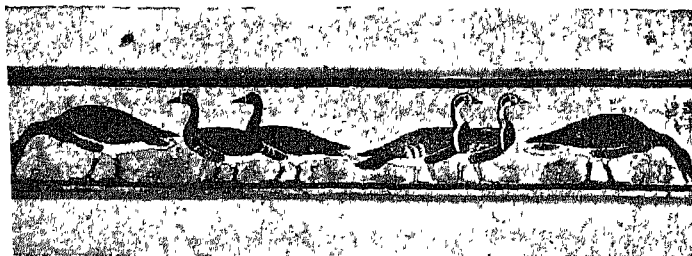


Fig. 8.—Painting of geese feeding (IVth. Dynasty, Meidum)  
Cairo Museum No. 136 E.

being a royal daughter, reigned over Egypt, adopting for herself the title of "King of Upper and Lower Egypt". It is quite probable that she married the high priest of Heliopolis, who did not act as king, but their son *Userkaf*, being of royal blood through his mother, inherited the throne and founded the Fifth Dynasty. Khentkawes built for herself a pyramid with its funerary and valley temples at Giza, near the pyramid of her father Menkaure.

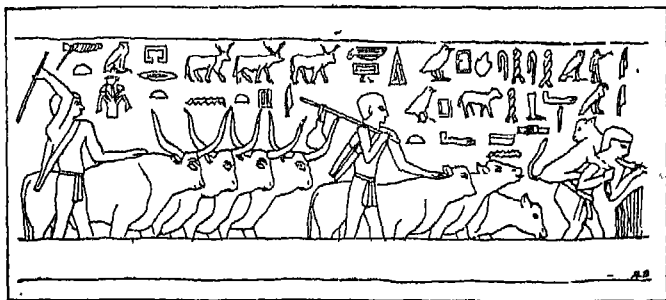


Fig. 9.—Herd passing a canal, from a relief in a tomb at Saqqara.

### The Fifth Dynasty (2563-2423 B.C.)

During the second half of the Fourth Dynasty the priests of Re at Heliopolis succeeded in organizing their political influence. This influence is evident in the names of the kings following Khufu, namely Dedefre, Khafre, Ba-ef-re and Menkaure, which are composed with the name Re. They became so friendly to the royal family that Queen Khentkawes married one of them as



mentioned before. The kings of the Fifth Dynasty, who are the descendants of Queen Khentkawes and the high priest of Re' at Heliopolis, added the title "Son of Re'" to the four other titles already attached to the royal name. This might have been due to the fact that their father was the high priest of Re'. By the royal residence in the vicinity of Memphis each king of this dynasty erected a magnificent temple to the sun containing as main feature a very tall obelisk upon a base, the symbol of Re' (fig. 11). The most important kings of this dynasty are :



Fig. 10.—Wooden statue of Sheikh-el-Balad (Vth. Dyn).  
Cairo Museum No. 140.

USERKAF. built his pyramid at Saqqara. As mentioned on the Palermo Stone he presented lands to the temples of Re', Hor and Hathor.

SAHURE'. built his pyramid and a sun-temple at Abusir (between Giza and Saqqara). His temples contain limestone columns with capitals in the form of lotus buds or palm leaves. The Palermo Stone records that he sent an expedition to Punt (Somaliland) which brought back 8000 measures of myrrh, 6000 units of weight of gold and 2600 staves of ebony.

As represented on the walls of his pyramid temple and in the tomb of Inta at Deshasheh, he sent some military expeditions against the Asiatics.

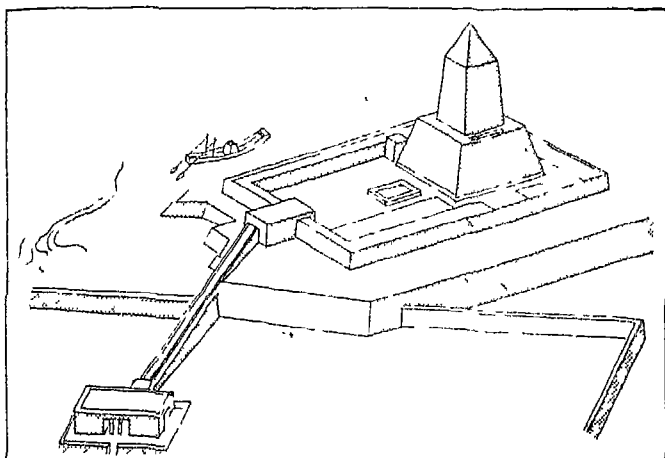


Fig. 11.—Restored bird's eye view of a solar temple at Abusir (Vth Dyn.)

**NEFER-IR-KA-RE** (*Kakai*) : He built his pyramid and temple at Abusir but only a few inscribed stones belonging to them have been found. He made gifts of lands to the gods, specially to the Great Ennead of Heliopolis.

**The Great Ennead** is a group of nine gods which were worshipped at Heliopolis. The Egyptians thought

that it was synthesised as follows: The Sun, whose local name was Atûm had created himself at Heliopolis. He had engendered without a female principle God Shu and goddess Tefnut (the Dry and the Wet), the distinction of which put an end to the Chaotic state of the world. Shu and Tefnut had, in turn, engendered Geb, the earth-god and Nut, the sky-goddess. These two had as children, Osiris, Seth, Isis and Nephthys, the individuals of the Osirian Legend. These nine gods constituted the so-called "Great Ennead".

The **Osirian Legend** may be summarized as follows: Osiris had been a very clever and pious terrestrial king whom his brother Seth put to death by a conspiracy. His wife, Isis found his body, Anubis embalmed it and then Isis fluttered her wings over him and restored life to him. Osiris, then, became the god of Dead, the Lord of the Hereafter and thus assumed the rôle in which he figures throughout historical times. His son, Horus, however, having reached man's age, took again by force the throne of his father and founded a line of terrestrial gods, from which the Pharaonic Dynasties issued.

NI-WSER-RE': erected his pyramid and a solar temple at Abusîr. On the temple walls are the reliefs representing the jubilee celebration which was usually held when the king completed thirty years of age, or 30 years of reign. *Ti*, whose famous tomb was found at Saqqara, was a priest during the reign of this king.

UNAS: This is the last king of this dynasty. He built his pyramid together with its funerary temple, causeway and valley temple at Saqqara. In his pyramid are found inscribed on the walls long religious text called "Pyramid Texts,, which were also extant within the pyramids of the following kings of the Sixth Dynasty. They consist of some magical formulae and prayers to the different gods, whose purpose was to facilitate the passage of the king's soul through the mysterious regions of the Hereafter.

### **The Sixth Dynasty (2423-2270 ? B.C.)**

As mentioned before, the kings of the Fifth Dynasty bestowed numerous gifts and endowed lands upon the priests and the local governors. This increased riches of the governors encouraged them to shake off gradually the rule of pharaohs and, after the reign of Unas, they succeeded in overthrowing the Fifth Dynasty. Among the most important kings of this dynasty one can mention:

TETI: It is quite probable that he had been one of the local governors, who was powerful enough to ascend the throne and control the whole country. He encouraged the priesthood of god Ptah of Memphis. At Saqqara, he built his pyramid whose interior walls

were inscribed with the Pyramid Texts. *Uni* began his career as a director of the royal domains under the reign of this king.

PEPI I: He is the most powerful king of this dynasty. In spite of the partial independence of the local governors, it is evident that he possessed enough authority to hold them well in hand. His monuments are found throughout Egypt. He built his pyramid at Saqqara and inscribed its inner walls with the Pyramid Texts. The foreign policy of Pepi I



Fig. 12.—Head of King Pepi I  
bronze statue (IVth. Dyn.).  
Cairo Museum No. 230

was more vigorous than that of any other pharaoh of earlier times. He conquered the Nubians and employed them in his army. He placed *Uni* at its head and sent him against the Beduins in Sinai. Embarking his force, he carried them in troop-ships along the coast of southern Palestine, and punished the Beduins as far north as the highlands of Palestine. This marks the northernmost advance of the kings of the Old Kingdom. His copper statue (*fig. 12*) and the accompanying

small one of his son are the oldest Egyptian metal statues known, the first of them being also the largest.

MERI-EN-RE': He is the son of Pepi I who died while Meri-en-re' was a mere youth. Meri-en-re' immediately appointed Uni, the old servant of the throne, as governor of the south, under whose trusty guidance everything fared well. He built his pyramid at Saqqara. His mummy was found in this pyramid and is now in the Egyptian Museum.

PEPI II: He is the brother of Meri-en-re, and the son of Pepi I. He reigned for about 94 years. He sent Khw-ef-hor at the head of an expedition to the Sudan, whence he returned bringing a dwarf from one of the pigmy tribes of Central Africa. He built his pyramid at Saqqara, the inner walls of which are inscribed with Pyramid Texts. In the last years of his long reign Pepi II became so weak that he could no more control the country.

Events after his death remain uncertain, and an impenetrable obscurity veils the last days of the Sixth Dynasty. The nomes switched to independence, and Egypt appears to have become once more divided into small kingdoms. This marks the end of the Old Kingdom which covers a period of about 930 years.

### **Civilisation during the Old Kingdom.**

The Old Kingdom left us with numerous temples, tombs and pyramids, scattered for many miles along the margin of the Western Desert. These monuments are the most eloquent witnesses of their sound knowledge of architecture as well as of mechanics, geometry, and internal organisation. They built the earliest known sea-faring ships, either exploring unknown waters, or pushing their commercial enterprises far up the Nile into the interior of Africa.

In government they had elaborated a highly developed state. The immediate head of the entire organisation of government was the vizir who acted at the same time as chief of justice and as chief archivist of the state. A great number of scribes and officials forming a hierarchy helped him in his governmental work. The local governors were responsible for the administration of their nomes. A king endued with power and ability, a vizir wise and intelligent and loyal governors in the nomes, meant a strong state; but if the king showed signs of weakness, the governor might gain an independence which would threaten the unity of the whole state.

In religion they were already dimly conscious of a judgement of the soul in the Here-after, thus being the first men whose ethical intuitions made happiness in the future life dependant upon character and morality.

**THE FIRST INTERMEDIATE PERIOD**

(2270-2060 B.C.)

After the fall of the Old Kingdom there ensued a dark period, now known as the "First Intermediate Period" during which Egypt was ruled by a number of local princes, some assuming the royal titles, but none being sufficiently powerful to control the whole country.

Civil war raged between these princes, every one of them trying to proclaim himself a king. The Asiatic Beduins might have profited by this chance and invaded the North-East of the Delta, as mentioned in the Petersburg Papyrus and other documents of later date but referring to this period. This period covers the dynasties from the VIIth to about the middle part of the XIth Dynasty.

The Seventh and the Eighth Dynasties were very short. Manetho mentioned that the Seventh Dynasty included 70 kings who reigned for 70 days. The Eighth Dynasty lasted for about 30 years. The rulers of these two dynasties were so weak that they were unable to erect any monumental works which might have survived to tell us something of their time.

The IXth and Xth Dynasties originated in Heracleopolis (Ihnasya el Medina, near Beni-Suef) where its local prince Kheti I proclaimed himself king of Upper



and Lower Egypt. The kings of these two dynasties were greatly helped by the princes of Asyût who were intimately connected with them. The princes of Asyût were able to build for themselves tombs in which they fortunately left records of the successful career of their family. They restored order in their nome, as can be deduced from the following text: "When night came, he who slept on the road gave me praise, for he was like a man in his house; the fear of my soldiers was his protection". The Heracleopolitan rule was at first accepted, at least theoretically, by the local hereditary princes of Thebes (Luxor). The latter, although independent, lived in peace with the royal house at Heracleopolis, but later, they gained the leading place in the first eight nomes of Upper Egypt; they withdrew their confederation from the control of Heracleopolis and organised an independent kingdom under their own rule. This marks the end of the Tenth Dynasty and the beginning of the Eleventh.

### **The First Part of the Eleventh Dynasty.**

In the first part of the Eleventh Dynasty (which ends at about 2060 B.C.) Egypt was under the rule of two royal families: The *Kheti* family in the Delta and Middle Egypt till Abydos; and the *Intef* and *Mentuhotep* family from Abydos to Aswan. Civil war took place between these two kingdoms until Mentuhotep II of

the South conquered the Heracleopolitans and reigned over the reunited kingdom. This marks the end of the First Intermediate Period and the beginning of the Middle Kingdom.

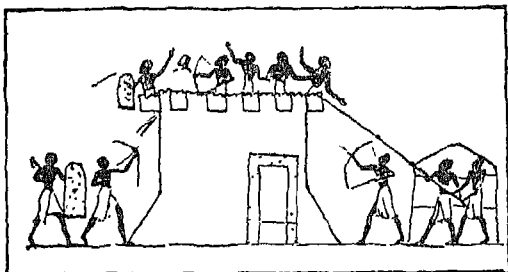


Fig. 13.—Siege of an Egyptian fortress during the civil wars (XIth. Dynasty)

### EGYPTIAN LITERATURE IN THIS PERIOD

The Egyptian language is rich in metaphors and figures of speech. Many religious texts, hymns, narratives, poems and proverbs are known from the *Old Kingdom*. Some sentences of the instructions of Ptah-hotep, the vizir of King Iseki of the Fifth Dynasty, may be quoted as an example of sapiential literature: "...show thyself by silence to be better than he, when he speaketh ill... Speak if thou knowest... If thou art one that sitteth where standeth the table of one who is greater than you, look not at that which lieth before

him but look at which lieth before thee. Shoot not many glances at him... laugh when he laugheth, that will be pleasing in his heart..."

But the full development of the literature appears only to have been reached in the *First Intermediate Period* and in the *Twelfth Dynasty*. It is the writings of this age that were read in the schools for five hundred years later. They are interesting since they deplore the misery which the world brings upon the individual and depict the frightful distress of a nation that has suffered from a complete collapse: "it is best for mankind not to be born". The most important texts of this pessimistic literature are the "*Complaint of the eloquent peasant*" and the "*Admonitions of a prophet*". The "*Tale of the eloquent peasant*" was composed solely in order to place in the mouth of a marvellous peasant a series of speeches in which he pleads his case against an official who had wronged him, with such eloquence that he is at last brought into the presence of the pharaoh himself, that the monarch may enjoy the beauty of the honeyed rhetoric which flows from his lips. The "*Admonitions of a prophet*" were written by a sage called Ipu-wer who depicts the misery already prevailing, and foresees what is still to come, and urges his hearers to fight against the enemies and reminds them that the worship of the gods must be restored.

**THE MIDDLE KINGDOM**

(2060-1785 B.C.)

As mentioned above, Mentuhotep II, one of the kings of the Eleventh Dynasty, reunited Egypt and ruled both Upper and Lower Egypt. He is, therefore, the founder of the Middle Kingdom which includes the second part of the Eleventh Dynasty and the Twelfth Dynasty and in which Egypt was a united kingdom governed by kings who bore the title "King of Upper and Lower Egypt."

**The Second Part of the Eleventh Dynasty**

(2060-2000 B.C.)

During the second half of the Eleventh Dynasty the following kings reigned over both Upper and Lower Egypt.:

<i>Mentuhotep II</i>	2060-2019 B.C.
<i>Mentuhotep III</i>	2019-2007 B.C.
<i>Mentuhotep IV</i>	2007-2000 B.C.

**MENTUHOTEP II:**

He reigned for about 51 years: the first ten years, as king of Upper Egypt only and the next 41 years as king of Upper and Lower Egypt. He was a very powerful

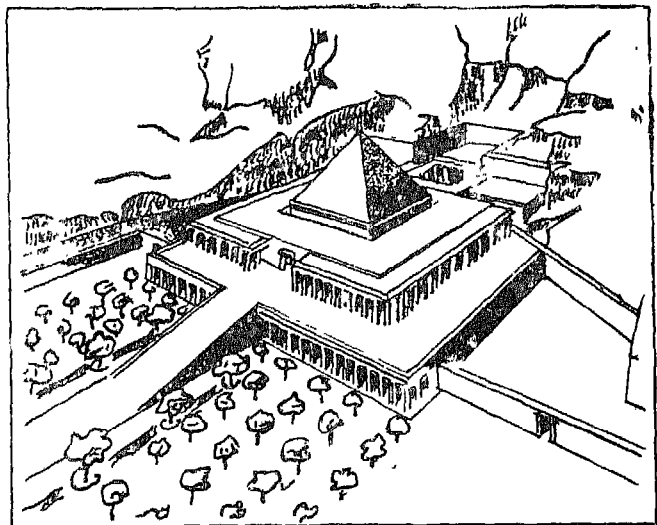


Fig. 14.-Restored bird's eye view of the temple of Mentuhotep II (XIth. Dyn., Deir-el-Bahari).

king. He conquered the Heracleopolitans, the Asiatics, the Nubians, and the Lybians as represented on some blocks of stone remaining from a temple which he built at El-Gabalein (near Armant). He built for himself at Deir el-Bahari a small pyramid surrounded by colonnades and terraces and approached by a long causeway apparently from a lower temple (*fig. 14*). Queens and princesses were buried in chambers below the terraces. The bodies of these queens and princesses were mummified and buried in decorated coffins which are now found in the Egyptian Museum,

## MENTUHOTEP III:

He sent an expedition of 3000 soldiers to Punt, by way of the Red Sea. The expedition started from Qift through Wadi-El-Hammamat to El-Quseir (on the Red Sea), from which they sailed to Punt. This expedition brought from Punt, among other things, myrrh and incense.

## MENTUHOTEP IV:

He sent an expedition of 10,000 men, under the command of his vizir *Amenemhét*, to Wadi-El-Hammamat to bring a sarcophagus for the king. The work was



Fig. 15.—A princess of the XIth. Dynasty at her hairdressing as represented on the Sarcophagus of The Lady Kawit, Cairo Museum No. 623.

speedily completed and Amenemhêt boasts: "My soldiers returned without loss; not a man perished, not a troop was missing, not an ass died, not a workman was enfeebled."

After this succession of these Mentuhoteps, we find that the Eleventh Dynasty was then displaced by a new and vigorous Theban family with an Amenemhêt at its head, who very likely is to be identified with the powerful Amenemhêt, the vizir of Mentuhotep IV.

### **The Twelfth Dynasty (2000-1785 B.C.)**

This is one of the most glorious dynasties of Egyptian history. It was founded by Amenemhêt I. Its kings are:

<i>Amenemhêt I</i>	2000-1970 B.C.
<i>Senuseret I (Sesostris)</i>	1980-1936 B.C.
<i>Amenemhêt II</i>	1938-1904 B.C.
<i>Senuseret II</i>	1906-1888 B.C.
<i>Senuseret III</i>	1887-1850 B.C.
<i>Amenemhêt III</i>	1850-1800 B.C.
<i>Amenemhêt IV</i>	1800-1792 B.C.
<i>Queen Sebek-neferu-rè</i>	1792-1785 B.C.

#### **AMENEMHET I:**

He is the founder of this dynasty. When he ascended the throne, Egypt was made up of small states, the rulers of which owed the king their loyalty but were neither his officials nor his servants. They were not appointed by the king, since their posts were hereditary. It was, therefore, a *feudal state* which could only exist as long as the king was strong, but any sign of weakness meant its rapid dissolution. Amenemhêt I did his best to limit the power of these governors and increase the rights

of the king. He restored the original boundaries between the different nomes thus preventing as far as possible the quarrels amongst them. In the nomes he appointed governors who were favourably inclined towards his House. They collected taxes and sent them to the king; they levied the soldiers for war and the service of the

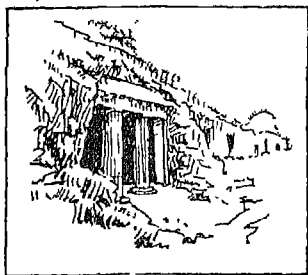


Fig. 16.—Rock-cut tomb at  
Beni-Hassan  
(Middle Kingdom)

of the river, some miles south of Memphis. This new capital was more suitable than Thebes as the administrative centre, since it falls between Upper and Lower Egypt.

The skill of this great statesman finally succeeded in furnishing Egypt with a stable organisation which enabled her to begin a period of productive development and great prosperity.

He built a new capital "Ithet-tawy" which means "control of the Two Lands", on the west side

He sent military expeditions against the Asiatic Beduins, Lybia and Nubia thus securing the safety of Egypt on all sides; he also added territory to Egypt.

Other expeditions were also sent to Sinai to extract copper and to Wadi-el-Hammamat to quarry stones.

He built a temple for the god Amun-re' at Karnak, and he erected his pyramid and temple at El-Lisht.



He associated his son Senuseret in the government of Egypt during the last ten years of his reign. On this occasion Amenemhêt I wrote an instruction for his son, which was considered as a model of the best literary style until the end of the Nineteenth Dynasty. He describes an attempt to murder him in the night, and

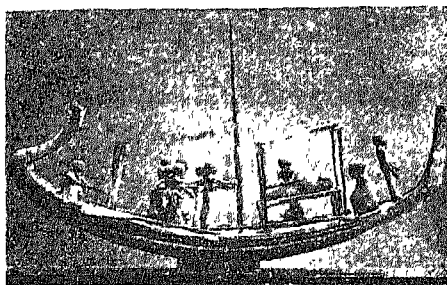


Fig. 17.—Model of funerary boat  
(Middle Kingdom).

advises his son to “trust no brother and know no friend”, and comments on the ingratitude on the part of those whom he had benefited.

### SEUSERET I:

After 10 years of co-regency, his father Amenemhêt I died and Senuseret reigned alone for about 32 years, and 3 other years in association with his son Amenemhêt II.

He sent successive expeditions to Nubia and extended the southern frontier of Egypt well into the Sudan as far as the Third Cataract. He erected a stela which mentions that he subdued 10 towns of this district. The expeditions brought back much gold from Nubia.



Fig. 18.—Senuseret I  
(XIIth. Dynasty).  
Cairo Museum No. 301

He built a pyramid and a funerary temple at El-Lisht. Ten beautiful limestone statues (fig. 18) about 1.90m high, all representing the king, were found hidden in this funerary temple. He also built a most beautifully inscribed temple of limestone at Karnak. He erected many other monuments all over Egypt, the most important of which is his Sun-Temple at Heliopolis of which nothing remains except one of its obelisks which is now found at Matariya. It is made of one big mass of

red granite and its height is about 66 feet.

The reigns of both Amenemhêt II and Senuseret II were long and prosperous, showing however no prominent event. The former built his pyramid at Dahshûr and the latter built his pyramid at El-Lahûn.

SEUSERET III (*Sesostris III*)

He is the most powerful king of this dynasty. He made several campaigns in the Sudan and Asia. He penetrated through Asia and extended the territories of Egypt into Palestine and also into the Sudan and he built enormous frontier fortresses near the Third Cataract at Semna and Kumma.

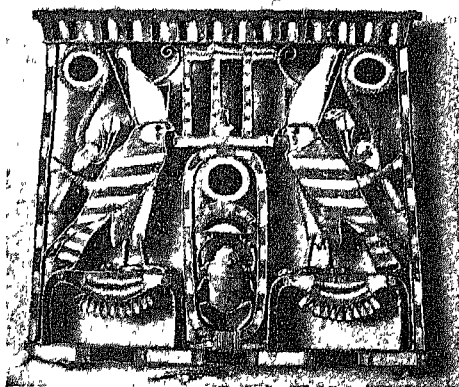


Fig. 19.—Inlaid pectoral of Senuseret II (XIIth. Dynasty), Cairo Museum No. 3970.

He erected his pyramid at Dahshûr. Near this pyramid, buried in the sand, were found the two large

wooden boats which were used at his funeral, perhaps, to enable him to make use of them in the Netherworld. These are now found in the Egyptian Museum. A huge statue of the king is also exhibited in the Museum.

Beside his pyramid at Dahshûr, were the queens and princesses' tombs in which were discovered the most beautiful collection of jewellery of Ancient Egypt.

### AMENEMHET III:

Under the reign of this king, Egypt enjoyed the most prosperous time in the Middle Kingdom, a time of peace and productive development in seeking new sources of wealth. Thus:

a) At Sinaï, the king established a well equipped colony for the exploitation of minerals, so as to create a permanent industry, contributing a fixed annual amount to the royal treasury.

b) He carried out great irrigation works and the drainage of land in the Fayum. He excavated the Morris lake, which acted as reservoir for the Nile water during inundations, so that when the river level subsided again, the water was allowed to escape through a canal, and could be employed in irrigation.

c) He constructed a nilometer to record the maximum height of the Nile every year in the fortress

of Semna This enabled his vizir to estimate the crops of the coming season and taxes were fixed accordingly.

He built a very large building known as the *Labyrinth* at Hawara, where he set the administrative centre for



Fig. 20.—Amenemhet III. Cairo Museum No. 284 (XIIth. Dyn.).

the whole country, special sets of rooms and halls being reserved for each nome. According to Herodotus it contained 12 halls and 3500 rooms.

He built two pyramids, one at Dahshûr and the other at Hawara.

Many monuments were erected during his reign and numerous smaller pieces can be seen in the different museums of the world.

The reigns of *Amenemhêt IV* and his sister *Sebek-neferu-rê* were short. They built for themselves pyramids at Dahshûr.

The death of Queen *Sebek-neferu-rê*, around 1785 B.C., marks the end of the Middle Kingdom, a period of magnificence and prosperity.

## THE SECOND INTERMEDIATE PERIOD

Although a relatively large number of monuments have been found from this period, its history is almost obscure. It can, however be divided into the following three secondary periods:

1. — The XIIIth and XIVth Dynasties (1785-1680 B.C.)
2. — The Hyksos Period, which includes the XVth, and the XVIth Dynasties (1680-1580 B.C.).
3. — The contemporaneous XVIIth Dynasty in the south (1680-1580 B.C.).

### Thirteenth and Fourteenth Dynasties (1785-1680 B.C.).

The first king of this period, *Amenemhêt Sebekhotep*, seems to have ascended the throne either through the marriage

with Queen Sebek-neferu-rê, or by sheer force, owing to the weakness of the last two kings of the Twelfth Dynasty. This king ruled from the Delta to the southern frontier at the Third Cataract, where the annual Nile levels were recorded during the first four years of his reign. He was followed by other kings of whom some were sufficiently powerful to control the whole country, while others were so weak that the local governors rose against them, waged war against each other and strove for the throne with the result that petty kings ruled simultaneously at Thebes and in the Delta.

This period ended at about 1680 B.C. when the Hyksos began to rule the Delta and a part of Middle Egypt while the Theban kinglets of the Seventeenth Dynasty reigned in the South.

### **The Hyksos Period (1680-1580 B.C.)**

Perhaps from about 1710 B.C. onwards, some Asiatic tribes migrated to Egypt. Since the kings of Egypt at that time were very weak and the country was in internal confusion, no one could drive them out and thus they settled in the eastern part of the Delta, where they founded a capital called *Avaris*. When they increased in number, they seized the occasion of the internal confusion and the extreme weakness of the kings and waged war against the Egyptians. They ruled the Delta

and the Northern part of Upper Egypt as far as El Qusieh around 1680 B.C.

It is recorded by Manetho that "under an Egyptian king named *Tutiamaios*, God became displeased with the people and there came up from the East, possibly from Arabia, an ignoble race styled *Hyksos* whose name in the Egyptian speech signified "Shepherd Kings", and who subdued Egypt without a battle. The Hyksos treated the Egyptians with great cruelty". Manetho was not very accurate in relating the events in this way since it is historically certain that the Hyksos did not really occupy more than the Delta and the Northern part of Upper Egypt. Moreover, the word "Hyksos" does not mean "Shepherd Kings" but rather "rulers of the foreign countries".

The origin of the Hyksos has been subject of much research and controversy and up till now no opinion is universally accepted. Thus some think that they were Asiatics who had been pushed into Egypt by the aryan migration, others picture them as the Hebrews of the Bible owing to some resemblance in their Semitic names.

Several Hyksos kings are known but the most important of them are *Khayan*, *Apophis* I, II and III.

The Hyksos adopted many of the customs of the Egyptians and assumed the Egyptian royal titles. On the other hand, they introduced into Egypt the horse and the war chariot and taught the Egyptians how to use them in war on a large scale.



### **The Seventeenth Dynasty in the South**

(1680-1580 B.C.)

During the reign of the Hyksos in the Delta and the northern part of Upper Egypt, the southern part of Egypt from Asyut to Aswan was ruled by some Theban kings who constituted the Seventeenth Dynasty.

It seems that the first kings of this dynasty did not try to expel the Hyksos from Egypt but only defended their northern frontier against them. Later, one of these Theban kings, *Seqenenre*, fought these foreigners with the aim of expelling them out of Egypt, but he was killed on the battlefield. His mummy was found in the royal hiding-place at Deir el-Bahari in about 1875, and is now kept in the Egyptian Museum. It shows that he received a mortal axe stroke which crushed the left side of his skull, leaving in it an opening two inches long. His son *Kamose* continued the war and his other son *Ahmose* succeeded in driving the Hyksos out of Egypt.

With the expulsion of the Hyksos out of Egypt ends the Second Intermediate Period and begins the New Kingdom which is the period of great wealth and prosperity of the wide Egyptian Empire.

The monuments found in Egypt, dating from the Second Intermediate Period show a great decline in style compared with those of the Twelfth Dynasty. The scarabs of this period have a characteristic shape and were found in Egypt in greater numbers than those of any other time.

**THE NEW KINGDOM**

(1580-1085 B.C.)

This period extended from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Dynasty.

The continuous war against the hyksos to expel them made Egypt a military state. During this period the king was the leader of the army. All the high officials participated in the war, and in their biographies, they narrate with the greatest satisfaction the campaigns in which they accompanied the king, and the honours which he bestowed upon them.

**The Army.**

The army was now well organized and became a standing one. In time of peace it was divided into two divisions, one in the Delta and the other in Upper Egypt. It was well equipped with horses, war-chariots, and many kinds of war weapons. It had acquired new tactics in attacking the enemy; thus we hear of the wings and centre as well as flank movements and definite battle lines. This strong army enabled the Egyptians not only to succeed in clearing Egypt of its foreign invaders, but also to extend the territories of Egypt southwards into Nubia and to invade many other countries, thus founding the most ancient empire in the world.

### Administration of the Empire:

The divine character which the king had since the earliest times had been transmitted to the royal ladies; since the king ought to be not only the son of the king, but also the son of a royal princess.

The king was the head of the state. The business of government and the duties of the king had so much increased that he appointed two vizirs, one residing at Thebes, for the administration of the south—from the First Cataract as far downstream as the nome of Asyût; while the other, who was in charge of all the region north of the latter point, was at Heliopolis.

The king also appointed a Viceroy of Nubia who was given the title of "King's son of Kush", a post that grew in importance with the interest taken by the kings of Egypt in the lands of the far South. In Asia the pharaoh appointed new *local chiefs* who were helped by *Egyptian Officials* to collect the tribute and Egyptian garrisons to keep order in the dominions.

Another most important official of this period was the high priest of Amun who was the supreme head of the great body of priests. The riches acquired through foreign conquests enabled the pharaohs to endow the temples with such "Waqfs" as no sanctuary of the old days had ever possessed. The temples became very large and the high priest of such a community wielded a considerable political power.

The feudal state had completely disappeared from Egypt in this period and all the governors were appointed by the king. They had to deliver a detailed report to the central government at the beginning of each of the three seasons of the year.

### The Eighteenth Dynasty (1580-1341? B.C.)

The kings of this dynasty are:

<i>Ahmose I</i> (Amasis I)	1580 — 1558 B.C.
<i>Amenhotep I</i> (Amenophis I)	1558 — 1530 B.C.
<i>Thutmose I</i> (Tuthmosis I)	1530 — 1515? B.C.
<i>Thutmose II</i>	1515? - 1505 B.C.
<i>Hatshepsût</i>	1505 — 1484 B.C.
<i>Thutmose III</i>	1504 — 1450 B.C.
<i>Amenhotep II</i>	1450 — 1425? B.C.
<i>Thutmose IV</i>	1425? - 1405 B.C.
<i>Amenhotep III</i>	1405 — 1370 B.C.
<i>Akhenaten</i> (Amenhotep IV)	1370 — 1352 B.C.
<i>Smenkhkare</i>	} 1352 — 1341? B.C.
<i>Tut-'ankh-amûn</i>	
<i>Eye</i>	

### AHMOSE:

This is the Son of king Seqenenrè and his wife queen Aah-hotep of the Seventeenth Dynasty. He succeeded in expelling the Hyksos from Egypt and in reuniting

Upper and Lower Egypt and thus he is justly considered to be the founder of the New Kingdom.

As mentioned in the tomb of the general *Ahmose son of Ebana* at El-Kab, king Ahmose conquered the Hyksos at their capital "Avaris" in the western Delta. They fled away into Asia taking refuge in their stronghold "Sharuhen". Ahmose pursued them and "besieged Sharuhen for three years and his majesty took it". Another general, Ahmose Pen-Nekhbet tells us that king Ahmose pursued the Hyksos northwards from Sharuhen forcing them back to at least a safe distance from the Delta frontier.

Returning victoriously to Egypt, he gave his attention to the recovery of the Egyptian possessions in Nubia.

During these wars king Ahmose was both general in the field and head of the state. As he had succeeded in his wars, he also succeeded in reorganising the country, abolishing entirely the feudal system and appointing his high officials whom he trusted.

He did not remove his residence but remained at Thebes, the capital.

His mummy and those of his wives *Ahmes-Nefertari* and *Kasmut* were found in the royal cachette of Deir el-Bahari and are now in the Egyptian Museum.

#### AMENHOTEP I:

He is the son of Ahmose and queen *Ahmes-Nefertari*. He carried out punitive expeditions into Nubia where

revolts had occurred against Egypt. It is quite probable that he extended the territories depending in Egypt to the south of Wadi-Halfa. It is also probable that he fought in Lybia and in Asia.

#### THOTMOSE I:

He was probably the Son of Amenhotep I, but as his mother was not of royal blood, he was not the legal successor to the throne. He, however, married his half sister princess Ahmose who was of royal blood and through whom he could assert a valid claim to the throne. He led his troops against Nubia where he himself killed the Nubian chief whom he hung head downwards at the prow of his royal barge, while returning to Egypt. He was the first king to penetrate Nubia to the Island of Thombos, about 45 miles south of the Third Cataract, where he erected five commemorative stelae. He also directed his armies against Asia, into which he penetrated as far as the Euphrates, where he set up a tablet recording his victories and marking the limits of his kingdom.

His tomb was discovered in the Valley of Kings at Luxor and his mummy is in the Egyptian Museum.

#### THOTMOSE II:

He is the son of Thotmose I but his mother was not of royal blood. He married his half sister *Hatshepsût*

who was a legitimate daughter of Thotmose I, and through this marriage he legalized his accession to the throne. He sent a punitive expedition to Nubia where there had been revolts against Egypt.

### HATSHEPSUT:

Thotmose II left two legitimate daughters (from Hatshepsût) and an illegitimate son called Thotmose. Thotmose married one of his half sisters and thus could legally succeed his father on the throne. But as he was still young, Hatshepsût, his aunt, stepmother and mother-in-law, declared herself coregent with him. Contemporary records hint that all was not well with the royal pair. Egypt was actually ruled by the capable and strong queen Hatshepsût, who was backed by a powerful political party led by a noble named *Senmût*.

She reigned like a king thus assuming all the titles causing herself to be represented on some of her monuments with a beard, and using the masculine pronouns when referring to herself. To justify her ascension to the throne and to strengthen her position, she claimed that she was the daughter of Amun-Re' himself from queen Ahmose her mother, thus affording the oldest known case of theogamy. This story of her birth is depicted on one of the terraces of her magnificent funerary temple at Deir el-Bahari (*fig. 21*).

Under Hatshepsût few, if any wars were undertaken.

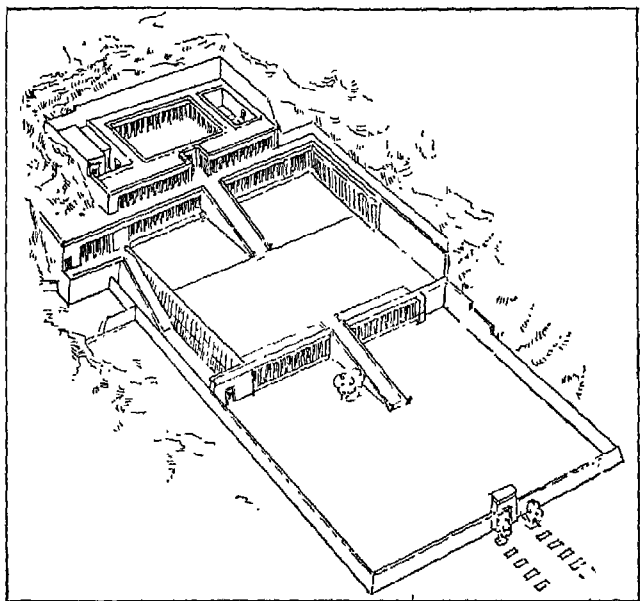


Fig. 21.—Funerary temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari (XVIIIth. Dynasty).

She sent a trading expedition to Punt to bring back myrrh, exotic trees of the tropical regions and other precious products. The scenes of this expedition are depicted in the admirable low reliefs on her funerary temple at Deir el-Bahari.

At Karnak she erected two tall obelisks which are still in place at the entrance of the Eighteenth Dynasty





temple. At an early epoch of her reign she prepared for herself a tomb in a cliff in a lonely valley south of the Theban necropolis. Later she made another tomb in the Valley of Kings where were found her sarcophagus and that of her father Thotmose I.

After her death, Thotmose III mutilated her figures and inscriptions in her funerary temple and broke up her statues. Her body has not yet been found.

### THOTMOSE III:

When Thotmose was left sole ruler, he proved to be energetic, and he is justly considered as the greatest pharaoh in the history of Egypt.

At the beginning of his reign by himself, the Asiatic rulers, having seen no Egyptian troops during the coregency, had united under the direction of the prince of Kadesh, and rebelled against the king. As mentioned in the *Annals of Thotmose III* at Karnak, Thotmose carried out seventeen campaigns against them in Palestine and Syria which he subdued, and pushed the frontier of Egypt as far back as the Euphrates. He also led a military expedition into Nubia and thus during his reign the Egyptian empire extended from the Fourth Cataract in the South to the Euphrates in the North (*Map. III*). He brought the sons of the Asiatic rulers with him to Egypt, where they were educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. This wise policy of Thotmose III had as

object to train the future Asiatic rulers in administration and to make them more loyal to Egypt.

Tributes were sent to Egypt from the different parts of the empire and the wealth of Egypt increased so much that he was able to endow the temples with much wealth and to construct many monuments all over Egypt.

He built a temple for the god Amun at Karnak, upon the walls of which he described his campaigns and recorded the plants and animals of Asia, which he had found during his excursions there. He also erected huge obelisks to commemorate his jubilees at Karnak and at Heliopolis, but not a single one of them still stands in Egypt. Four of them, however, are now in the most important squares of Constantinople, Rome, London and New-York.

His famous statue (*fig. 22*) as well as many other monuments belonging to him can be seen in the Egyptian Museum.



Fig. 22.—Thotmes III,  
(XXIIIth. Dyn.)  
Cairo Museum No. 400.



Fig. 23  
A priest at  
purification rite

The tomb of his famous vizir *Rekhmare* was found at Thebes and it contains very important historical texts

### AMENHOTEP II:

He is a legitimate son of Thotmes III whom he had associated with himself on the throne during the last year of his long reign.

A great limestone stela discovered lately at Giza records that he was extraordinarily strong and a great sportsman enjoying horse-riding, rowing and archery.

He crushed a rebellion in northern Syria and personally sacrificed seven of the Asiatic princes before Amun, six of whom he subsequently caused to be hanged on the walls of Thebes and the seventh on the walls of Napata in the Sudan, where he had gone to fix the southern boundary of Egypt. Another important stela discovered recently at Memphis records that he carried out another campaign in Asia and that he brought back many prisoners including 3600 of the Hebrews. This is the most ancient mention of Israel in Ancient Egypt and shows that, by now, the Hebrews were a recognized people, living in Palestine. This proves that they vacated Egypt before the reign of Amenhotep II.

His tomb was found in 1898. and it contained his mummy and the mummies of some other kings, women and a boy.

### Royal Mummies.

The discovery of these royal mummies in Amenhotep's tomb and in the royal cachette of Deir el-Bahari was due to chance. Towards the end of the Twentieth Dynasty, bands of

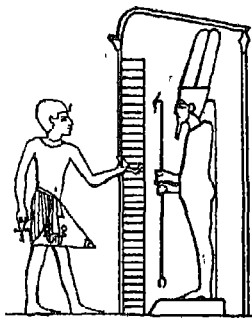


Fig. 24.—King opening the naos of Amun.

robbers plundered the tombs and destroyed the mummies in order to gain possession of the jewels which adorned them. At the beginning of the reign of Sheshonq I, the first king of the XXII<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty, these mummies were collected and



Fig. 25.—Foreign soldiers of the Egyptian army.

some of them were hidden in an old tomb of the XIth Dynasty at Deir el Bahari, while the others were placed in a small chamber in the tomb of Amenhotep II at Wadi el Mulûk, the entrance to which was blocked up. The mummies were kept safe in these two hiding places until they were discovered in 1875 and 1898 respectively. The cachette of Deir el-Bahari included the mummies of kings Seqenenrè, Ahmose I, Amenhotep I, Thotmose I, Thotmose II, Thotmose III, Seti I, Rameses II, Rameses III and the mummies of queens and high priests. The tomb of Amenhotep II contained the mummies of that king himself, Thotmose IV, Amenhotep III, Menepthah, Siptah, Seti II, Rameses IV, Rameses V, and Rameses VI together with three unidentified women and a boy. These were transferred to the Cairo Museum

### **Mummification**

The method of mummification during the New Kingdom can be summarized as follows: the body was put on a wooden board and the brain extracted. An incision was made in the left side of the abdomen and all the abdominal contents taken out, the kidneys in most cases excepted. The diaphragm was cut and the thoracic contents taken out except the heart.

The main aim of mummification was to dry the body so that anaerobic bacteria could not live on its tissues. Both the body and the extracted viscera were, therefore, put separately in a heap of dry natron and left in this

state for a fixed number of days during which water was driven out of them by osmosis. The cranial cavity was then stuffed with resin or linen soaked in resin. The thoracic and abdominal cavities were stuffed with various materials such as cinnamon, myrrh, cassia, linen, linen soaked in resin, sawdust, natron, and occasionally one or more onions. The body is anointed with cedar oil and then rubbed with myrrh. The whole body is then treated with molten resin which would strengthen and consolidate the body and would at the same time close its pores and prevent atmospheric moisture from penetrating it. The body was at last bandaged with bands stuck together with gum or resin.

#### THOTMOSE IV:

He is the son of Amenhotep II. Long before his father's death while he slept in the shade of the Sphinx at noon, the sun-god, with whom the Sphinx in his time was identified, appeared to him in a dream, asking him to clear his statue from the sand and promising him with the throne. The god's promise was fulfilled; the young prince ascended the throne as Thotmose IV and he cleared out the sand from the Sphinx. This event is recorded on a large granite stela which Thotmose erected between the forepaws of the Sphinx.

He carried out punitive expeditions into Asia and Nubia where there had been revolts against Egypt.

He married a Mesopotamian princess named *Mutemuya*, who gave birth to Amenophis III.

### AMENHOTEP III: (*Amenophis III*)

His reign was almost wholly a period of peace and great prosperity. His only war-like activity was a punitive expedition to Nubia.

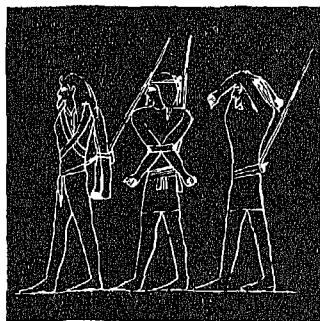


Fig. 26.—Prisoners of War.

Some Mesopotamian princesses were sent to him as wives, but the most outstanding and beloved of all his wives was queen *Tyi*, the mother of his son Akhenaten. She was the daughter of *Tuia* and *Thuiú* whose famous monuments are found in the Egyptian Museum. Many scarabs are inscribed with records of this marriage.

His favoured architect *Amenhotep son of Hapú* constructed for him many monuments of which are the following:

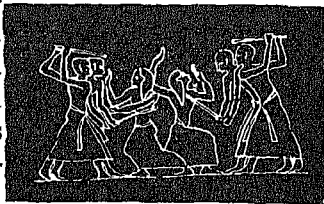
1.—The Luxor temple, on the walls of which he depicted the story of his divine birth, the god Amun-rè being his father,



2.—Additions at Karnak.

3.—A road lined on both sides with ram-headed sphinxes, leading from Luxor to Karnak.

4.—A large temple near the valley of the Queens on the western side of the Nile, in front of which the two enormous statues known as "*colossi of Memnon*" were erected.



5.—A huge hard limestone group representing Amenhotep III, Queen Tyi and three of their daughters found at Medinet Habu and now in the Egyptian Museum.

Fig. 27.—Punishment of spies

### AKHENATEN: (*Amenhotep IV*)

Amenhotep IV was about 24 years when he ascended the throne. He passed the first 6 years of his reign at Thebes and even constructed a temple at Karnak in which he erected some deformed colossi representing him. After the sixth year of his reign he changed his name to Akhenaten which means "He who is devoted to Aten" and founded a new capital which he called "*Akhetaten*" at Tell el 'Amarna, to which he moved together with his family and government. He conceived a violent



Fig. 28.—Akhenaten with his wife Nefertiti  
& two of their daughters.

hatred for the god Amun and endeavoured to establish Aten (the sun's disk) as the supreme deity of Egypt. He erased the name of Amun from the temples and all the other monuments he met, and persecuted the priests of Amun.

During his reign Egypt's Asiatic empire gradually collapsed as proved by the "*Tell el Amarna Letters*" (Cairo Museum Nos. 1194-1197) which were written in cuneiform on clay. These letters were sent to him by the



Fig. 29.—The Royal harem of Akhenaten.

viceroy, asking for his help and telling him that they could no longer hold out against Egypt's enemies.

Akhenaten married the beautiful queen *Nefertiti*, "the beautiful one has come". At first she went with him to Akhetaten but later they seem to have quarrelled. They separated, Akhenaten and Smenkhkarè, his elder and favourite son-in-law, living in one quarter of the capital, while Nefertiti and Tut-'ankh-Aten, another son-in-law, lived in another. This quarrel could probably have led to the return of Akhenaten to the worship of the god Amun by the end of his reign while Nefertiti did not.

Although Akhenaten reigned for 18 years only, yet the arts and language of this period assumed a characteristic style which can be described as realistic.

He was fond of poetry and he composed some hymns in praise of Aten, which had been found engraved on the walls of the tombs at Tell el-Amarna.

Nothing is known regarding the death or the tomb of Akhenaten.

#### SMENKHKARE:

Akhenaten left no one who could succeed him; thus his elder son-in-law, Smenkhkare', became co-regent with him for a period. Smenkhkare' also reigned for a short time after Akhenaten's death and appears to have returned to Thebes.

His body was found intact in a cache in the Valley of the Kings at Thebes together with part of his funerary equipment.

#### TUT-'ANKH-AMUN:

He succeeded Smenkhkarè when he was about 9 years old. He was also another son-in-law of Akhenaten, but his parentage has not yet been definitely established. At the beginning of his reign he lived at Tell el-Amarna, and his name was Tut-'ankh-Aten. After a short time he returned to Thebes and to the worship of Amun as is recorded on a stela found at Karnak. He changed

his name to Tut-‘ankh-Amun which signifies “the living image of Amun”.

He built a colonnade in Luxor Temple adorned with representation of the rejoicing which took place on the resumption of the worship of Amun.

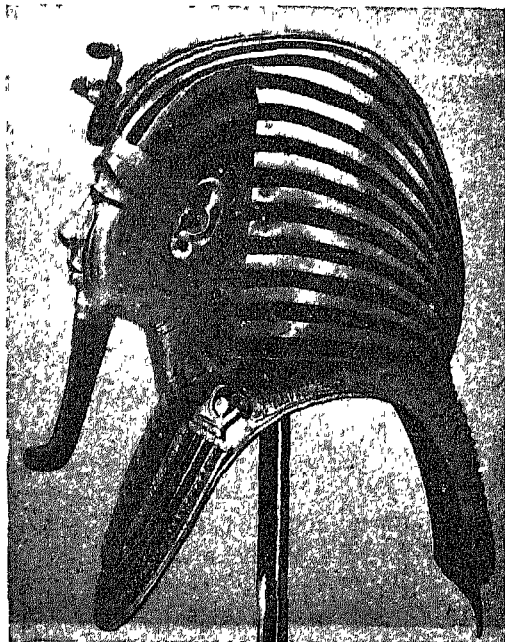


Fig. 30—Tut-‘Ankh-Amūn’s gold mask  
(XVIIIth. Dynasty), Cairo Museum, Guide No. 220

He reigned for nine years until he was 18 years old, which was proved by the examination of his mummy. In 1922 his tomb was discovered almost intact in the Valley of the kings at Thebes. Its magnificent contents which amazed the whole world are now exhibited in the Egyptian Museum.

He was succeeded by king *Eye* who might have married his widow. He was the last king of this dynasty which lasted for about 260 years .

The period from the reign of Akhenaten to the end of this dynasty is known as the "*Heresy Period*".

### **The Nineteenth Dynasty (1341?-1200 B.C.)**

The kings of this dynasty are:

<i>Horemheb</i>	1341? - 1320? B.C.
<i>Rameses I</i>	1320? - 1318 B.C.
<i>Seti I</i>	1318 — 1298 B.C.
<i>Rameses II</i>	1298 — 1232 B.C.
<i>Meneptah</i>	1232 — 1224 B.C.
<i>Amenmes</i>	) 1224 — 1200 B.C.
<i>Siptah-Meneptah</i>	
<i>Seti II</i>	

### **HOREMHEB:**

He was the general of the army during the last years of the Eighteenth Dynasty for it is known that at about

the end of the reign of Akhenaten, he was sent at the head of a military expedition to Asia where he subdued Palestine. Helped by the clergy of Amun, he succeeded Eye on the throne. He legalized his accession to the throne by marrying a royal princess named *Mutnedjemet*. He was very loyal to the worship of Amun, and destroyed all the temples of Aten and restored those of Amun which had suffered during the Heresy period.

Egypt was in poor condition owing to the internal confusion in Egypt before his reign. He had to pay, therefore, all his attention to the internal reorganization of the state and thus, most probably, he did not send a military expedition to Asia.

As recorded on a pylon at Karnak, he promulgated an edict to prevent abuses against the poor by fiscal officers.

### RAMESES I:

It seems that Horemheb had no son and thus he himself chose Ramesses I, his capable and powerful vizir and general, to succeed him on the throne. He was an old man and reigned only for two years.

### SETI I:

At the beginning of his reign he led a large army into Asia and triumphantly carried the Egyptian army to Tyre. He led another campaign to Asia where the

Egyptians fought against the *Hittites* for the first time. Although he conquered them at Kedash, yet they checked his progress northwards and peace was concluded between the two powers.

Seti also undertook campaigns against the Libyans who invaded the western frontiers of Egypt. These Libyans had blue eyes and blond hair and thus were not the original Libyans but new tribes of the Indo-European races who migrated to that district.

He constructed many monuments, the most important of which are his fine temple at Abydos, the great hypostyle hall at Karnak and his well known mortuary temple in the Valley of the Kings at Thebes.

He made for himself in this valley a magnificent tomb which penetrates over 100 metres into the heart of the rock, in a series of halls, passages and stairways.

His embalmed body, now in the Egyptian Museum, is perhaps the most lifelike and impressive of all the royal mummies.

## RAMESES II:

At the beginning of his reign the situation in Syria was extremely precarious. The power of the Hittites had increased and they advanced southwards as far as Kadesh. Ramses II led his army against them. When he came near Kadesh he heard that the enemy was in full retreat, and therefore hurried forward with his



chariot and the most mobile of his troops, leaving his main army to follow. The Hittites crossed the River Orontes in his rear and thus got between him and the bulk of his troops. Rameses and his bodyguard found themselves trapped, the Hittites being on their new front and right, the garrison of Kadesh menacing their rear, and the river cutting them off on the left. Rameses was a tall, powerful young man of about 21 years of age. He at once decided to charge back along the river-side road and burst his way through the enemy so as to reach his southern troops. He tied the reins of his horses around his waist so that his hands might be free to use his weapons.

He and his small bodyguard burst their way right through the enemy from the north, while his southern troops did the same from the south, killing many of the enemy's troops including the Hittite king's brother and driving others into the river. A great part of the Hittite army with the king at its head was still on the other side of the river, while about half of the Egyptian army had not yet joined the battle, but owing to the great losses of both sides in the first battle, some sort of truce was called and Rameses returned to Egypt where he engraved the scene of this battle on the walls of the great temple at Karnak.

He led other campaigns into Asia where his progress was such that the Hittites were obliged to retreat and to concede the greater part of the country to the Egyptians.

After the death of the Hittites' king, his successor made a treaty of peace with Rameses. Both the Egyptian and Hittite copies of this treaty have survived, the Egyptian versions being found at Karnak and the Ramesseum. Some years later Rameses married the daughter of the Hittites' king.

Rameses II made Tanis, in the eastern Delta, his capital. He had many wives, the most important being

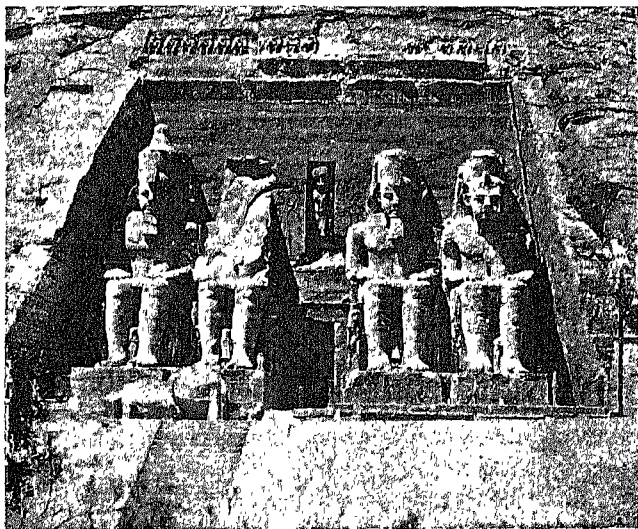


Fig. 31.—Large rock-cut temple at Abu-Simbel (Rameses II).  
(XIXth. Dynasty).

queen *Nefertari* whose magnificent tomb is in the Valley of Queens at Thebes. He had numerous sons and daughters. He made considerable additions to the temples of Karnak and Luxor. His mortuary temple in the Theban necropolis, now called the Ramesseum, was one of the most imposing buildings in Egypt. Here, before the entrance, was a colossal seated figure of Rameses nearly 20 metres in height and weighing over 1000 tons. The most famous temple of his reign is that of Abu Simbel in Nubia (*fig. 31*). He had many colossi representing him in different postures of which two can be seen at Memphis. He seems also to have collected statues of different dates, and belonging to many other previous kings, which he usurped and carved his name on them.

His body was found in the royal cachette of Deir-El-Bahari and is now in the Egyptian Museum.

### MENEPTAH:

He was the son of Rameses II and was about sixty years old when he ascended the throne. In spite of his age he led an army into Syria where there was a general revolt against Egypt after his father's death. His rapid success shows that Egypt was still powerful and well organized during his reign.

There was a serious invasion against Egypt from the West by the Libyans, on whom he inflicted a crushing defeat.

An account of these wars is recorded on the "Israel Stela" which mentions "Israel is laid waste, his race

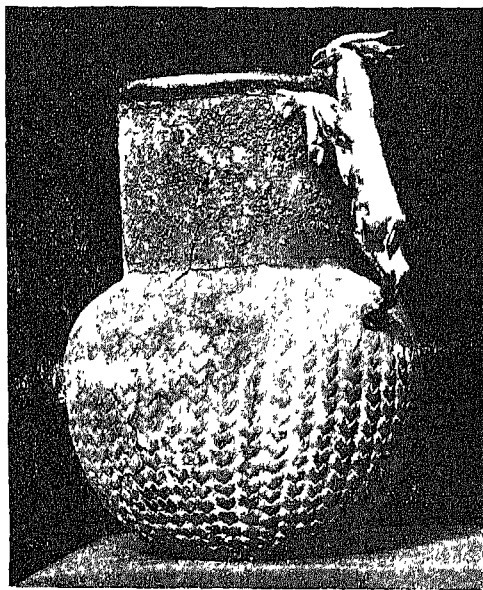


Fig. 32.—Silver vessel with gold handle  
in form of a goat (XIXth Dynasty).  
Cairo Museum No. 4216

no more exists". This is the second mention of **Israel** in Egyptian texts. It was believed before that **Meneptah** was the Pharaoh of the Exodus, but, as stated before,

the Amenhotep II stela discovered recently at Memphis proves that this event took place before the reign of Amenhotep II.

After Meneptah some kings reigned for short periods and their inefficient external policy enabled the Indo-European nations to penetrate the Egyptian Empire.

### **The Twentieth Dynasty (1200-1085 B.C.)**

The kings of this dynasty are:

<i>Setnakht</i>	1200 — 1198	B.C.
<i>Rameses III</i>	1198 — 1166	B.C.
<i>Rameses IV to XI</i>	1166 — 1085	B.C.

After a short period of anarchy at the end of the Nineteenth Dynasty, a saviour arose in the person of an old man of unknown origin named *Setnakht* who ascended the throne, and founded the XXth Dynasty. He reigned for two years during which he re-established law and order as mentioned in the *Harris papyrus*.

#### **RAMESES III:**

He is the most important king of this dynasty. He continued the internal reorganization of the country begun by his father.

In the fifth year of his reign the Libyans made an alliance with the *Aegeans* and invaded the Western Delta, but Rameses defeated them. In the 11th year of his

reign they again attacked Egypt and Ramesses defeated them and killed their leader. His victories were decisive for they did not attack Egypt at all after his reign.



Fig. 33.—Rameses III (XXth. Dynasty)

He led two other expeditions, both by land and by sea, against the Asiatic tribes and he inflicted on them such a severe defeat that the Egyptian power in Asia was fully re-established.

An account of his wars and victories is recorded on the walls of his magnificent mortuary temple at Madinet Habu (*fig. 34*), at the southern end of the Theban

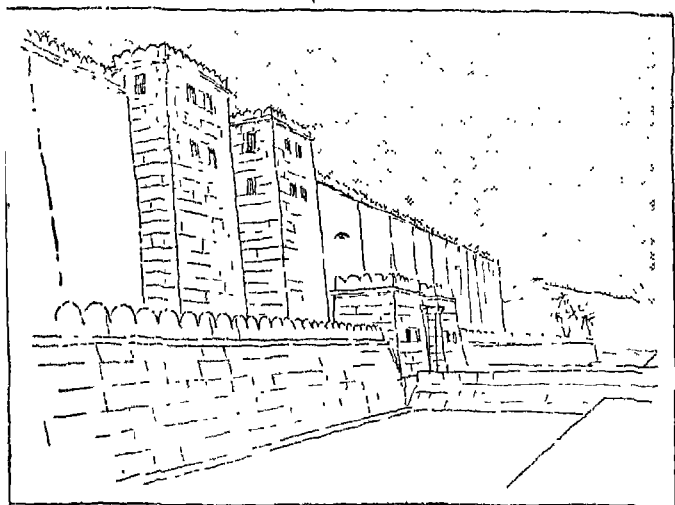


Fig. 34.—Entrance gate of Madinet-Habu Temple (Rameses III).

necropolis. This temple contains also several chambers the walls of which are sculptured with scenes representing Rameses in his harem, surrounded by his wives, some of whom sing and play to him while others waft ostrich-feather fans to and fro or carry bunches of flowers.

He built many other monuments among which are the temple of Khonsu and another at the side of the forecourt at Karnak.

The Harris papyrus gives us an account of the chief events of his reigns as well as a list of his donations to the temples of the gods.

He also paid his attention to trade, sending expeditions to Punt to bring myrrh and other precious products. Copper was extracted from Sinai and gold from Lower Nubia.

#### RAMESES IV to XI:

These Ramessides succeeded Rameses III on the throne. During their reign Nubia remained loyal but the Asiatic empire of Egypt came to an end.



Fig. 35.  
Rameses VIth.  
leading a  
prisoner  
(XXth. Dyn.).

Under Rameses IX most of the royal tombs were robbed and the inquiries concerning this event were recorded in the *Abott papyrus* and the *Amherst papyrus* which are now kept in the British Museum.

During this dynasty and the following dynasties till the *Saitic Period* the religious life in Egypt was most flourishing.

The priesthoods of the local gods had become very powerful. At Thebes the god Amûn-rè was worshipped in Karnak and Luxor temples; at Abydos, Osiris and Isis; at Memphis, and Heliopolis, Ptah and the Sun-god were adored respectively. At Tell-Basta in the Delta the



Cat-goddess Bast had a great temple and at Sais in the Western Delta the goddess Neith had her temple and priesthood.

In many localities in Egypt sacred animals were also offered a cult: Thus at Memphis was the sacred bull "*Apis*"; at Elephantine (Aswan), the sacred ram of "*Khnum*"; at Hermopolis (Tuna el-Gabal), the sacred ibis of "*Thot*" and in the Fayûm, the crocodile of "*Sobek*"

This increased power of the priests, especially those of Amûn-rè had weakened the last kings of the XXth Dynasty to such an extent that "*Herihor*", the High-priest of Amûn-rè in the time of Rameses XI was able to mount the throne and founded the XXIth Dynasty at Thebes.



Fig. 36.—Libyans, and Asiatics

**THE DECADENCE PERIOD**

(1085-715 B.C.)

This period includes the dynasties from XXIst to XXIV.

**The Twenty-First Dynasty:**

During the last years of the reign of Rameses XI of the Twentieth Dynasty, *Herihor* who was the High-Priest of Amûn-rè, the chief Commander of the army and the vizir associated with Rameses XI in the government. After Rameses' death he was able to reign over Upper Egypt. It seems that another person of unknown origin named *Smendes* (1085-1054) ruled the Delta. The former's capital was Thebes, where he completed the temple of Khonsu at Karnak and inscribed the names of his 18 sons and 19 daughters upon its walls. Smendes remained at Tanis; he married a royal princess and thus legalized his accession to the throne. After the death of Herihor, Smendes seems to have reigned over all Egypt.

*Psusennes* (1054-1009 B.C.) succeeded Smendes. His tomb has been recently discovered at Tanis and it contained his magnificent funerary equipment, now exhibited in the Egyptian Museum. His daughter married Herihor's grand-son "*Paynedjem*" who assumed the royal titles although he probably did not reign over

Egypt but remained High-Priest of Amûn-rè at Thebes. The High-Priest of Amûn-rè, however, had at that time a



Fig. 37.—Caricature of a lady at her toilet.



Fig. 38.—Caricature of a bald unshaven man.

very great power in the South, comparable to that of the king in the North.

The successor of Psusennes was *Amenemapt* (1009-1000 B.C.) whose funerary equipment was also found recently at Tanis.

Two other weak kings reigned over Egypt, *Siamun* (1000-984 B.C.) and *Psusennes II* (984-950 B.C.). It is generally believed that Kings David and Solomon were contemporaneous with the kings of this dynasty.

### **Twenty-Second to Twenty-Fourth Dynasties**

At about the close of the Twentieth Dynasty, a Libyan

family settled at Heracleopolis (South of Memphis) where it acquired wealth and power. After the death of Psusennes II, the last king of the XXIst Dynasty, *Sheshonq*, the chief of this Libyan family, with the help of the Libyan mercenaries, was able to succeed him on the throne. He legalized his accession by marrying his son *Osorkon I* to *Makarê*, the daughter and heiress of Psusennes II.

The kings of this XXIInd Dynasty are:

<i>Sheshonq I</i>	950 — 929	B.C.
<i>Osorkon I</i>	929 — 893	B.C.
<i>Sheshonq II</i>	893 — ?	B.C.
<i>Takelot I</i>	? — 870	B.C.
<i>Osorkon II</i>	870 — 847	B.C.
<i>Five other kings</i>	847 — 730	B.C.

Sheshonq I appointed one of his sons prince "*Iûpûi*" as High-priest of Amun-re at Thebes, thus maintaining a close connection between the clergy of Amûn and the crown.

He carried out a campaign in Palestine which the Bible (I Kings XIV, 25 to 26) mentions as follows: "In the fifth year of king Rehoboam, Shishaq, King of Egypt, came up against Jerusalem. And he took away the treasures of the house of Yahveh, and the treasures of the king's house, he took away all; and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made".

Sheshonq recorded his victories in Asia, on the external wall of the great hypostyle hall at Karnak. Some of the funeral equipments of three kings of this dynasty, namely Sheshonq II, Takelot I and Osorkon II, have been recently discovered at Tanis (now in the Egyptian Museum).

The weakness of the last kings of this dynasty encouraged the local governors to claim for the throne with the result that some one called *Pedubast* seized the power and founded the XXIIIrd Dynasty which seems to have been contemporaneous with the last part of the XXIIrd Dynasty. The history of this period as well as that of the Twenty-fourth Dynasty is very obscure. It is however known that Egypt was ruled by contemporary kinglets and that it was at last invaded by the Nubians.

## THE LATE EGYPTIAN PERIOD

(715-332 B.C.)

This period extended from the XXVth to the XXXth Dynasty.

### The Twenty-Fifth Dynasty (715-663 B.C.)

According to Drioton, the clergy of Amûn did not admit the accession of Sheshonq and thus, quite probably, some of the priests left Thebes for the Sudan where

they founded a small kingdom, with Napata as capital. *Piankhi* ruled this small kingdom at about 751 B.C. After many quarrels with *Tefnakht*, a king of the XXIVth Dynasty, and his allies, he at last subdued all Egypt, but did not declare himself king of Egypt and left Osorkon III and Tefnakht on the thrones of Upper and Lower Egypt respectively. After the death of these two kings, Tefnakht's son, *Bocchoris*, reigned over both Upper and Lower Egypt for about five years which ended at 715 B.C. After the death of Piankhi, his successor, *Shabaka*, put aside Bocchoris, declared himself pharaoh and united Egypt and Nubia under his sceptre. This marks the beginning of the Nubian XXVth Dynasty.

The kings of the XXVth Dynasty are:

<i>Shabaka</i> (Sabacon)	715 — 701	B.C.
<i>Shabatoka</i>	701 — 690	B.C.
<i>Taharqa</i>	690 — 664	B.C.
<i>Tanutamun</i>	664 — 656	B.C.

*Shabaka* was a man of great piety and he added many buildings in the temples of Amûn at Karnak, Luxor and Madinet Habu. His sister and wife Queen *Amenirdes* who was also the *divine consort* of god Amûn, erected some buildings in her own name in these temples. Her beautiful alabaster statue is now in the Egyptian Museum.

*Shabaka* sent a military expedition under the leadership of his nephew *Taharqa* (Tirhakah of the Bible) to

Palestine, to check the activities of the Assyrians, but Taharqa was defeated and returned to Egypt without attaining any result.

The reign of *Shabatoka* was peaceful, and after his death, his cousin *Taharqa* succeeded him.

Taharqa made his residence at Thebes, which being in the centre of his kingdom was more suitable as a capital than Napata, too far in the South. War arose between him and the Assyrians and it continued for some years at the end of which *Ashurbanipal* was able to defeat Taharqa and his successor *Tanutamun* and captured Memphis and Thebes. Tanutamun fled to Napata where the Nubian Dynasty continued to reign over its original country. About 300 B.C. the Nubians transferred their capital to *Meroe* where they founded the Meroitic Kingdom.

The Assyrians divided Egypt into provinces each of which was put under the rule of the native prince of the locality. Over Saïs and Memphis was placed *Nekaw*, son of Bocchoris. With the help of the Greek mercenaries, his son Psametik was able to expel the Assyrians from Egypt and to establish himself firmly upon the throne of Egypt. Thus begun the XXVIth Dynasty.

### The Twenty-Sixth Dynasty

The time of this dynasty is known as the *Saitic Period*, after the capital Saïs (near, Kafr el Zayyat). During

this period Egypt was again a united kingdom and enjoyed considerable prosperity. The monuments of this dynasty show great influence from the Old Kingdom forms in sculpture, painting, architecture, as well as language, and that is why this period is sometimes known as *the Renaissance*. The Kings of this dynasty are:

<i>Psametik I</i>	663 — 609	B.C.
<i>Nekau</i>	609 — 594	B.C.
<i>Psametik II</i>	594 — 588	B.C.
<i>Apries</i>	588 — 568	B.C.
<i>Ahmose II</i> (Amasis)	568 — 525	B.C.
<i>Psametik III</i>	525	B.C.



Fig. 39.—*Psametik I*  
(XXVIth. Dynasty.)

#### PSAMETIK I:

At the beginning of his reign, Upper Egypt was actually ruled by the Theban prince *Mentuemhat* and Queen *Shepenupet II*, the widow of Taharqa and “divine consort of Am<sup>un</sup>”. She was at that time, an old woman and Psametik succeeded in persuading her to adopt his daughter *Nitocris* as her heiress and successor. Thus the loyalty



of the priesthood of Amûn was secured. Psametik repaired the temples of Amûn at Thebes, which had been partly damaged by the Assyrians. He also suppressed the influence of Mentuemhat, who might have still been loyal to the Ethiopian kings at Napata, by appointing beside him a high official loyal to Psametik himself.

To defend Egypt against any external enemy, he established garrisons at the frontiers, the first in the South to face the Nubians, the second in the East to face the Assyrians and the third in the West to face the Libyans.

Psametik directed his attention to commerce, specially with the Greeks. He also encouraged them to settle in Egypt among the natives. Many Egyptians learnt to speak Greek. The Greeks in their turn studied Egyptian philosophy, religion, arts and customs.

#### NEKAW (*Necha of the Bible*)

He was the son of Psametik I. He led his Greek and Egyptian troops into Syria where he defeated the Jews at Megiddo and killed Josiah, king of Judah. He then penetrated farther North to the Euphrates. His new Asiatic empire did not, however, last for a long time, since, four years later, he was defeated at Carchemish (on the Euphrates) by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who also captured Jerusalem and destroyed the temple.

Nekaw returned to Egypt and devoted the rest of his reign to the promotion of trade and arts. He made an unsuccessful attempt to re-open the ancient canal connecting the eastern arm of the Delta with the Red Sea. He also sent an expedition to circumnavigate Africa setting out from a port in the Red Sea and returning through the strait of Gibraltar. This expedition was successfully accomplished in three years.

#### PSAMETIK II:

Son of Nekaw and reigned only for 6 years during which he waged a successful war against Nubia.

#### APRIES (*Hophra of the Bible*)

He agreed with Zedekiah, king of Judah to fight Nebuchadnezzar, but the latter defeated them. The Prophet Jeremiah, together with some Jewish princesses and nobles, fled to Egypt where they sought refuge in the fortress of *Daphnae* (Taphanhes of the Bible). Apries was dethroned by *Amasis*, an Egyptian general, who succeeded him.

#### AHMOSE II (*Amasis*)

This king maintained and greatly favoured the relation of Egypt with the Greeks and promoted the various activities in his own country. He noticed that the Greeks had been trading all over the Delta and that their great prosperity made the Egyptians clash with them. He, therefore, decided to confine them in

one district in Egypt and thus founded for them a Greek city called *Naucratis*, on the Western branch of the Nile. To this city, all the trade from Greece to Egypt was brought up the Nile by ships in order that customs duties should be collected.

At the end of the long reign of this king, *Cyrus*, the Persian king, conquered Babylonia and became the master of all Western Asia. He died in 525 B.C.

### PSAMETIK III:

<sup>3</sup> He was the son of Amasis. At the time he ascended the throne, *Cambyzes*, the successor of *Cyrus*, invaded Egypt and killed Psametik III. This marks the end of the XXVIth Dynasty.

### The XXVIIth Dynasty or the First Persian Domination (525 - 404 B.C.)

After the murder of Psametik III, *Cambyzes* was crowned king of Egypt and assumed all the titles of an Egyptian Pharaoh. Although Herodotus stated that he killed the sacred bull *Apis* and that he showed much contempt for their religious beliefs, yet it seems that *Cambyzes* had no hatred towards Egyptian religion.

His successor *Darius* (522-485 B.C.) was also crowned king of Egypt. He restored many temples and built a new one for Amûn-rè at Khargah oasis and quarried the stones from Wadi el Hammamat. He also re-opened

the canal between the Nile and the Red Sea, which Nekaw had attempted to do before. The ships could therefore pass from the Mediterranean Sea through the Nile and this canal to the Red Sea, thus facilitated the trade very much in these localities.

*Xerxes*, *Artaxerxes I* and *Darius II* reigned successively after Darius till the year 404 B.C. and during their reign Herodotus the famous Greek historian visited Egypt. Under Darius II the Persian power had declined in Egypt. After his death *Amyrtaeos* of Saïs rebelled against Persia, and Egypt regained its independence. Thus ends the XXVIIth Persian Dynasty.

### **The Twenty-Eighth to Thirtieth Dynasties**

The Twenty-Eighth Dynasty continued only for a period of six years (404-398 B.C.), during which only one king, *Amyrtaeos*, reigned over all Egypt, and Saïs was his capital.

The Twenty-ninth Dynasty (398-378 B.C.) originated at *Mendes* (near Mansûra). The most important of the four kings of this dynasty is *Achoris* (Hagar) who repelled a Persian invasion after three years of resistance.

The Thirtieth Dynasty (378-341 B.C.) originated at *Sebennytos* (Samannûd). Its founder *Nectanebo I* (378-360 B.C.) defeated the Persian army which *Artaxerxes II* sent to regain control of Egypt. His architectural activities can be traced in the most important centres of Egypt,

His son *Tes* reigned for two years and he invaded Syria with an army of 80,000 Egyptians, 10,000 Greek mercenaries and 1000 Spartans, but on account of a rebellion raised against him in Egypt he failed and fled to the Persian king, who protected him.

The last king is *Nectanebo II* (359-341 B.C.). He constructed many monuments everywhere in Egypt. About 343 B.C. the Persian king, *Artaxerxes III* (Ochus), invaded the Delta and captured Memphis. Nectanebo seems to have fled to Thebes where he reigned over Upper Egypt for about two years, after which Thebes was also captured by the Persians. Nothing is known about Nectanebo II after that. After a short period of Persian domination, extending from 341 B.C. to 332 B.C., Alexander the Great entered Egypt.

This marks the end of the Egyptian dynasties and the beginning of the *Ptolemaic Period*.



Procession of sacred boat,

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PART II

THE PTOLEMAIC PERIOD



## THE PTOLEMAIC PERIOD

### ALEXANDER IN EGYPT

Since the defeat of king Psammetichus III at Pelusium (525 B.C.) by Cambyses, king of the Persians, Egypt had been under their domination, till the native rulers succeeded for a brief period to regain their independence (404-341). They formed, according to Manetho, the 28-30th Dynasties. Nectanebo II, the last Egyptian king had to flee to Upper Egypt and the country was once more under the Persian rule (341). A prince of the Delta, *Khabbash*, attempted an insurrection but in vain.

In spite of the benevolent attitude of Darius and most of the Persian kings towards the Egyptians, these bore foreign rule with difficulty and the period was marked by numerous insurrections, which gave rise to repressions and pillage. The second Persian domination was particularly held in hatred by the Egyptians on account of the depredations caused by king Artaxerxes II Ochus (342-338). Dwellings were devastated, temples looted and religious services were no more held.

Alexander appeared to the Egyptians as a saviour, as did the Arabs ten centuries later during the Persian

domination of the Sassanian Empire. Aged twenty, he had succeeded his father Philip, king of Macedonia.

At the head of his armies, he conquered the Persians at the River Granicus (334) in Asia Minor. He also



Fig. 40.—Alexander.

conquered another army under the command of king Darius Codoman at Issus (333) in Northern Syria. He entered Syria, Phenicia, and the port of Tyre (332) after a long siege of seven months. It seems that an Egyptian, *Tefnakht*, had gone to meet him and was present at the battle of Issus, and had begged him to help his wretched country. Egypt was the last sea base around the Mediterranean which he had

to visit, although it was not situated on his itinerary to Persia.

The Persian governor of Egypt, the satrap *Mazakes*, ordered that the gates of Pelusium, the key of the eastern frontiers, should be opened and the city surrendered. Alexander followed the Pelusiatic branch of the Nile

upstream to Memphis, passing by Heliopolis. An account of the period spent by Alexander in Egypt is given by the "*Romance of Alexander*", written in the IIIrd century A.D. and incorporating many traditions and imaginative stories, with the nationalistic aim of picturing the Macedonian king as a descendant of king Nectanebo and queen Olympias, wife of Philip.

Alexander followed a policy full of tolerance, different from that of the Persians in Egypt. He visited the Egyptian gods, and presented offerings to the Apis bull at Memphis and the other deities. This may be due to:

1. — The high consideration in which the Egyptian civilization was held by the Greeks, as is proved by the accounts of Herodotus, a Greek tourist who visited Egypt in the Vth century B.C., and others. According to them, Greek customs, sciences, arts and religion issued from the Egyptian ones.

2. — The tolerant policy which Alexander followed towards the oriental countries which he subdued, a policy which was taken over by *Ptolemy* and his dynasty. Its aim was to content the Egyptians by keeping their civilization and paying tribute to their religious and social customs.

Alexander organized in Memphis sports and musical entertainments, with the help of well-known Greek actors. Then he went downstream along the Canopic branch of the Nile, passing by Naucratis and he founded on the Mediterranean, near a small fishing village,

Rhacotis, a port, intended to replace Tyre which had been destroyed during the seven months siege. He went to visit the Oasis of Siwa and passed through Marsa Matruh. It seems that he was attracted there by the temple of Zeus-Ammon, renowned for its divine oracles. He was led to the oasis through the desert by animals acting as the gods' messengers and there he entered the sanctuary alone with the high-priest and was greeted as "Son of Zeus", a title equivalent to that of "Son of Ammon-Re" for the pharaoh. From then on, he was considered as the son of Ammon and pictured on coins wearing the two horns of the sacred ram of that god.

Alexander returned from Siwa to Memphis, crossing the Libyan desert, and instituted a government before he left Egypt in spring 331 B.C. The country was considered a part of the new Macedonian Empire and was governed by two Egyptian governors of provinces, the nomarchs *Petisis* and *Doloaspis*, the latter for a short period. Petisis acted as minister of the Interior, *Apollonios* and *Cleomenes* being governors of the outer districts. There was an army in the Delta under the command of two Macedonian noblemen and a fleet that guarded the Egyptian coasts of the Mediterranean. This state did not last till the death of Alexander at Babylon (June 323 B.C.), for we find the whole country under the leadership of Cleomenes, who proved to be a very efficient minister of Finance, at the expense of the priesthood and the whole population,

## THE DIVISION OF ALEXANDER'S EMPIRE

At the death of the young conqueror, his generals proposed to place on the throne his child whom his Persian spouse *Roxane* had born. However, they agreed, after serious misunderstanding, that Alexander's half brother *Philip Arrhidaeus* should associate with Roxane's son in the government of the empire, which was divided into eight provinces, each under the command of one of the army's generals. *Ptolemy*, son of *Lagos*, one of the cleverest generals and a friend of the late emperor, succeeded in securing Egypt and he assumed the Persian title of "satrap", or governor of this country on behalf of the two co-emperors.

### PTOLEMY I SOTER

(323-283 B.C.)

#### Policy

Ptolemy, then aged 44, proved to be a very keen politician and most efficient governor. As to foreign policy, his program seems to have included:

1. — Subjection of the neighbouring countries of Egypt, viz. Libya and Syria,

2. — Controlling the ways of communication leading to Alexandria which were in Egypt the Upper Nile and the road of the Eastern Desert, and outside the country, the islands of the Eastern Mediterranean and ports of Phenicia and Syria. All these were keys to the traffic between Egypt and the Eastern commercial centres.

3. — Preventing the rebirth of Alexander's Empire through any of his generals. This led Ptolemy to take part in all coalitions which were to oppose these generals, without really indulging in any serious war.

Inside the country, Ptolemy founded sound politics based upon the experience and capital of Greek financiers, and worked for peace and cooperation between Egyptians and Greeks.

### **The Four Coalitions.**

One of the causes of the *first coalition* (323-321) of the generals was that Ptolemy had kept the body of Alexander at Memphis, according to the historian *Pausanias*, instead of burying it at Siwa, as had been agreed at Babylon. At Triparadisos, in northern Syria, the generals met and divided the empire anew giving Ptolemy Egypt and Cyrenaica. He succeeded afterwards in spreading his domination over Crete and, at the death of the regent Antipater, he took Syria from Laomedon (318 B.C.).

In the *second coalition* (318-316) Olympias, mother of

Alexander, caused Philip Arrhidaeus to be killed. A quarrel had arisen between *Cassander*, son of the late regent Antipater and general *Polyperchon* and war ensued in which Ptolemy did not help.

The *third coalition* (316-311) saw the victory of *Antigonos* of Syria over Ptolemy and his associates and his founding of the Cyclades islands coalition at Delos, to destroy Ptolemy's influence in the Aegean Sea. Following his "imperialist policy" he acknowledged the independence of Greece and went to its help, so that he was surnamed the "saviour" (*soter*). He conquered some cities in Asia Minor, spent a winter in Cos island where his second wife *Berenice* bore to him a son, *Philadelphus*. In order to avoid Antigonos of Syria, he left Greece, where he seized some towns and organized the "isthmian sports contests". But feeling the mistrust of the Greeks towards him and wishing to spare his troops so as to regain Syria, he suddenly returned to Egypt. He put *Magas*, his son from Berenice, on the throne of Cyrenaica, thus making of it an Egyptian province. As a result of this coalition Ptolemy lost Coele-Syria (Low Syria or Southern Syria).

In the *fourth coalition* which was against Antigonos, the Egyptian fleet was defeated at Salamines (Cyprus). In 306, the governors of the provinces resulting from the division of Alexander's empire took the title of "king". After having conquered Cyprus and Palestine, Antigonos directed his fleet and army towards Egypt, but contrary winds prevented the cooperation between them, and his

troops were thrown back at Pelusium. The fleet took Rhodes, withdrawing it from Egyptian influence.

The "Syrian Contest" was to remain a point to be settled by the first kings of the Ptolemaic Dynasty. Ptolemy I left the throne to his son from Benerice, Philadelphus (285) and he died two years later (283).

### Inner Policy.

The satrap Ptolemy, governing Egypt for Philip Arrhidaeus and Alexander II (323-317 B.C.), then for Alexander II alone (317-311 B.C.), assumed the title of "king" in 306, thus proclaiming his independence. He



Fig. 41  
Coin of Ptolemy I Soter.

bore the full rank of an Egyptian pharaoh and was represented as such on the Egyptian monuments. According to hieroglyphic texts and ancient historians, among whom is *Justin*, his reign was marked with moderation. It seems that property was left to its owners and that Egyptian officials, namely the nomarchs, remained in their posts. A Greek general (*Strategos*) was appointed in every nome to keep an eye on the Egyptian civil governor and his power increased until he finally superseded him. Two general



governors were at the head of Lower Egypt (20 nomes) and Upper Egypt (22 nomes), an organization inherited from the New Kingdom.

Finances were in the hands of Greek officials under the superintendence of a minister of Finance (*dioiketes*), who was responsible for the revenues of the kingdom. The status of the inhabitants of towns and villages did not change. Workmen and artisans were still free to produce and sell their goods, which were not yet subject to government monopolies. Ptolemy I was the first to coin money in Egypt, although this country had previously used Persian "darics", and mint coined by the native king Takhos for his Greek mercenaries (359 B.C.).

Building activities resulted in the foundation of a new city, Ptolemais-Hermiou, which was larger than Memphis, according to Strabo, and the construction of the Museum and a palace.

To achieve his aim of finding a common ground of understanding between natives and Greeks, he encouraged the cult of the god "Usir-Hapi" and grecized it into "Serapis-Pluto", as head of a triad including Isis and Harpokhrates.

**PTOLEMY II PHILADELPHUS**

(283-246 B.C.)

The Egyptian kingdom was to reach its apex in the reign of Ptolemy II and Ptolemy III, on account of the favourable circumstances and the wisdom of these two kings.

Ptolemy II ascended the throne when he was 25 years old and he was called "Ptolemy son of Ptolemy", being given the surname of *Philadelphus* ("loving the brother") only after his death. He had been associated with his father in the government for two years so that he might be sure of succeeding him instead of Ptolemy the elder, *Keraunos*, son of *Eurydice*.

He was quite different from his father, being lazy and inactive. He studied with Strato and showed interest in natural history and geography. He never led armies to war, but accompanied once a commercial and scientific expedition up the Nile. He married *Arsinoe*, daughter of Lysimachus, but afterwards exiled her to Coptos.

**Foreign Policy and Wars.**

The policy of the Ptolemies was "imperialist" aiming at spreading its foreign dependencies in Asia and meddling with Greek affairs. This could not be attained with

wars. This policy of the Alexandrine court was strongly supported by Arsinoë II, the second wife of the king and his own sister (279-274 B.C.). She had previously married Lysimachus, who caused Ptolemy Keraunos at her instigation to kill his own son by a former marriage. This murder kindled a war during which Lysimachus was killed (281 B.C.) by Seleucos. Ptolemy Keraunos, however, defeated him and was proclaimed king of Macedonia.



Fig. 42.—Coin of Arsinoë Philadelphus.

The three powers which were going to rule the Eastern Mediterranean till 150 B.C. were now apparent: Macedonia and Greece, Asia Minor and Egypt. Ptolemy extended his influence to Nubia, divided into the kingdoms of Meroë and Napata.

: During the *first Syrian war* Ptolemy entered Syria (276 B.C.). According to the laudatory reports on the hieroglyphic stelae, Ptolemy and his sister visited Heronopolis (near Suez) and the king “received taxes from the cities of Asia, cut heads and was victorious over the fleets and numerous armies” (*Sais Stela*). A similar report is heard from the hellenistic poet *Theocritus*. It is curious to compare with these a cuneiform inscription describing the Seleucid army as throwing the Egyptian

one out of Syria (276). Whatever the truth is, Phenicia remained in the power of Ptolemy, thanks to the Egyptian fleet which also spread its influence on Crete and the Cyclades islands. A treaty with Antiochus I kept Egypt's position.

In the West, *Magas* the half-brother of Ptolemy, revolted but was stopped in his march towards the valley by the desert tribes.

After the death of Arsinoe, Ptolemy followed the same policy but, failing to help the Athenians, they were defeated in the *second Syrian war* while his fleet was also defeated in two battles. He thus lost his influence on the Aegean islands, but kept Coele-Syria, according to the treaty with Antiochus II. This was consolidated by the marriage of this king with Ptolemy's daughter, Berenice. On the other hand Egypt's dominion over Cyrenaica was secured by the marriage of Ptolemy's son with the daughter of Magas.

### Government

Documents are more numerous and help to picture the reign of Ptolemy II better than that of his predecessor. More Greeks appear in responsible posts, there being a prime minister who was also in charge of finance (*dioiketes*) and a minister of justice [*archidikastes*]. A council (*boule*) helps the king, and the numerous complaints and decrees are dealt with by a secretary (*epistolographos*). The government seems to have reached

its final status in this reign, being similar to the ancient Egyptian one, where the pharaoh was also owner of the whole land. He had his own agricultural lands and controlled the others through an elaborate system of monopolies. Revenues were collected by "farmers" or people who bought the right of gathering agricultural and industrial products or taxes against payment of a fixed total amount.

The army was composed of Greeks and mercenaries from Asia Minor and the Balkans, who could settle in plots of land in the Fayûm. Responsible heads were all Greeks. The financial activities of the government became the most important.

### **Local Government.**

The government of the nome passed to the general (*strategos*), usually a Greek who acted both as civil and military ruler. Sometimes a native nomarch is still found responsible for the public works and the royal domains. Under the authority of the general were a host of officials for justice, police, treasury, inspection, archives and taxes.

### **Greek Cities.**

Some Greek cities are known to have been independent, with their own councils (*boule*, *ekklesia*, *geroussia*); their inhabitants were divided into tribes and families, with their own Greek tribunals and judges. They were named after the king, Ptolemais, or the queens or deities,

### **Religion and Social Life.**

Besides the native and grecized deities, a cult of the royal family was established. Pharaohs were gods and the Ptolemies enjoyed the same cult in Egyptian temples. They were also worshipped by the Greeks under their titles of "Soter" (Saviour, 308 B.C.) or "Philadelphus" (Brother-loving) a title originally born by Arsinoe and which passed over to her brother after his death. Alexander had his own cult and priest. Ptolemy II removed the body from Memphis to Alexandria and placed it in a special monument called "Sema" Arsinoe was goddess of the Fayum, the "Arsinoite Nome" and identified with Aphrodite, goddess of love. After her death Ptolemy associated her in the royal cult. He was interested in the things of the mind and encouraged sciences. This did not prevent him from following his lust, and numerous names of women have been found associated with his. Elephants were hunted and brought from Somaliland on special cargo-boats, and were trained for war.

### **PTOLEMY III EVERGETES I**

(246 - 221 B.C.)

The reign of Ptolemy III begins with wars and ends in peace.

Like his father Ptolemy I, he was a strong character. He married Berenice II, daughter of Magas. A Syrian war began when he ascended the throne on account of the hardships imposed upon Berenice I, daughter of Ptolemy II and wife of Antiochus II, and her murder. Numerous texts describe his victorious campaign against the Seleucids towards Mesopotamia, which was cut short by a hurried return to Egypt on account of a rising there. The fleet was however defeated and Ptolemy kept his Syrian possessions but lost his dominion over the Cyclades (241 B.C.).

A period of 20 peaceful years followed, marked only by financial help to the enemies of Macedonia and the Seleucids. Elephants had been used for the first time in war. Ptolemy brought back the gods which had been stolen from Egypt by the Persians and was accordingly called "Euergetes" (Well-doing). The mercenaries and prisoners who returned were given plots of land in the Fayum. Ptolemy and Berenice were associated with the cult of Alexander and that of Ptolemy II and Arsinoë II, "the Adelphoi gods", under the name of the "Well-doing gods" (*Theoi euergetai*).

A decree was issued by the native priesthood which assembled at Canopus in 273 exalting the honours to the deified kings, instituting a fifth class of priests and reforming the calendar. This most important attempt was to bring the official year, which was shorter by a quarter of a day, to correspond to the solar one, by intercalating

one day at the end of every four years. The date of the death of young Alexander II (311 B.C.) was chosen as the beginning of the era of chronology. It was not however until Julius Caesar that the leap-years was used.

The activity of Ptolemy III in building is apparent in the erection of the magnificent temple of Horus at Edfu, which was completed only 180 years afterwards and of many chapels at Philae, Aswan, Karnak, Esnah.

### PTOLEMY IV PHILOPATOR

(221 - 203 B.C.)

The son of Ptolemy III and Berenice reigned at the age of 23, while Antiochus III was the youthful king of the Seleucid Empire since 223 B.C., when he was only 18 years old. The Egyptian kingdom, united and strong, was to totter and decline at the end of his reign on account of his bad administration. He was as passionate and lazy as his grand father and he left the government in the hands of his minister *Sosibius* son of Discorides, an able and crafty man. He got rid by murder and with the king's approval of Lysimachus, Berenice, the king's mother and Magas, his younger brother. Cleomenes, king of Sparta who had come to Ptolemy as a suppliant asking for help, was imprisoned and after a vain attempt to raise the Alexandrines, he committed suicide together with his followers.



This aspect of the king's character be completed by another of lust and luxury. He was under the miserable influence of *Agathocles* and his sister *Agathoclea*; he was a devotee of Dionysos and the "Great Mother", a Phrygian goddess.

### **Wars.**

The cities of the Cyclades islands and Crete, under the influence of Egypt, turned to other countries for help. Some ports in Asia Minor were still tributaries of Egypt. Antiochus, under the instigation of his able minister Hermias, became aware of the miserable state of affairs at the Alexandrine court and marched against Egypt. He was however stopped by *Theodotos*, governor of Palestine, and truce ended this campaign. In 219 B.C. Antiochus succeeded in taking the city of Seleucia and received from the hands of Theodotos, who joined him, the cities of Tyre and Ptolemais.

The Alexandrine court obtained a truce of four months during which it removed to Memphis and carried out a secret reform of the army and fleet. 20,000 fellahin were armed with long spears and trained in the Macedonian style, in square blocks. The main body of the army was Greek and Macedonian, with corps of Galatians, Thracians, and Libyans.

Antiochus entered Coele-Syria and fortified himself in the city of Ptolemais. The main force of the Egyptian

army had not yet been sent. The court went to the battlefield and on June the 22nd in 217 B.C. 7,000 soldiers on foot, 5,000 horsemen and 73 elephants met Antiochus' army near Raphia. The African elephants were powerless against the Asiatic ones of Antiochus and the latter, seemed near victory. Nevertheless, the battle ended in his utter defeat. Egypt only regained Palestine by a dishonourable treaty.

### **Inner Policy.**

Ptolemy returned to Egypt after a tour of three and a half months in Palestine. He married his sister Arsinoë and a synod of Egyptian priests at Memphis decreed a cult of both under the name of the "gods loving the father" (*theoi philopatores*), in addition to the kings already adored in Alexandria. A yearly festival was instituted in the temples to commemorate the victory at Raphia, while the ten days at the beginning of every month were considered as feasts in all temples.

This victory marked the decline of the Ptolemaic Empire and Dynasty. The national feeling was revived at the return of the fellahin soldiers, conscious of their strength, and ready to use it to regain their independence. From now on, there were frequent riots.

The king left the government in the hands of Agathocles and Agathoclea who lived in the palace, although the queen was still there. He indulged in

poetry and dionysiac practices. A boy was born to him by Arsinoe III and was associated with him on the throne.

As an attempt to prevent nationalistic risings, he favoured the clergy with endowments and buildings, and completed the buildings begun by his father. However, the riots were particularly active in Upper Egypt and the rebels fortified themselves in the Edfu temple for 20 years.

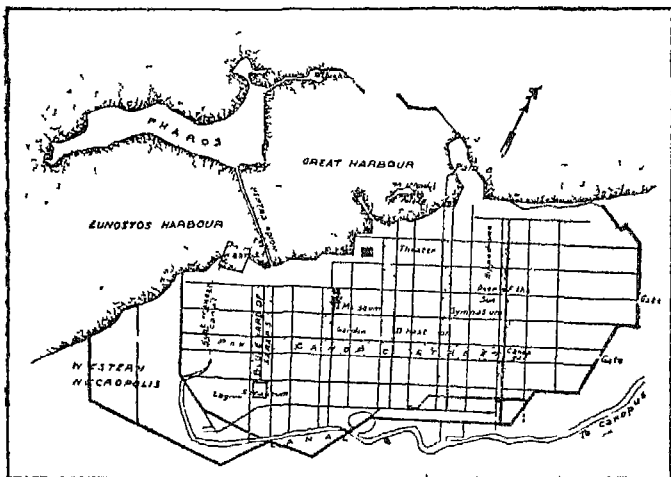
Elephants were still used although they had proved to be but a poor means in war. Good relations were maintained with Nubia and the hieroglyphic names of both kings of Egypt and Nubia are inscribed side by side on a temple at Pselchis. During the war between Egypt and the Seleucid empire, another important contest was waged between Rome and Carthage, which ended in the triumph of Rome. The friendly relations begun under Ptolemy II with Rome, were marked by the coming of envoys seeking to buy corn.

The end of Philopator is obscure (203 B.C.) and his death was kept secret to allow Agathoclea and Hippe to seize the treasury and the power.

### **ALEXANDRIA.**

The capital founded by Alexander seems to have reached its general aspect under Ptolemy II. It was situated on a long stretch of land 5 km. by 1,200 km.,

between the Mediterranean and the Mariut Lake. It had been planned by *Dinocrates* of Rhodes, according to the usual plan of a Greek city, on a mesh of blocks and streets at right angles. A large avenue about 31 m. wide called



Map. IV.—Alexandria in the Greco-Roman Period

Canopic Road ran from the "Canopic Gate" on the East to the "Door of the Moon" on the West and met another one transversally running North-South, from Lake Mareotis to the Large Port. From ancient writers we know about 5 quarters, named after the first 5 letters of the alphabet. Palaces were built on the shore, and in the centre of the city stood the public buildings: Court of Justice, temple of Serapis, Museum and

Library, Theatre. A long mole of seven stades (Heptastadion=1295 m.) separating the two ports, connected the city to the Pharos Island, where was erected the Lighthouse. East to the palace quarters (*Brouchion*) was the large port, well protected against high seas, while on the West of the mole was the port of the "Good Return" (*Eunostos Limen*). The canal of Schedia coming from Canopus skirted the town on its southern boundaries and provided it with sweet water. To the South-west of the city was the native quarter of Rhacotis with the Serapeum. The Scm̄a and the tomb of the Ptolemies were erected near a garden dedicated to the god Pan, having inclined spiral alleys.

### *PUBLIC BUILDINGS.*

**The Pharos.** — Ptolemy I began its construction and Ptolemy II inaugurated it (280 B.C.). This huge lighthouse, the first of its kind in ancient times, was planned by *Sostratus* of Cnides and dedicated, according to an inscription it bore, to the "Saviour Gods", Ptolemy I and Berenice. Pliny the elder (79 A.D.) reports that it costed 800 talents (4,800,000 gold francs). It was built in nummulithic limestone, decorated with sculptures, bronze, and marble ornaments, and granite columns from Syene. Later coins show that it had three storeys:

the larger, square on plan, reached an estimated height of 60 m.; the middle one, polygonal, was

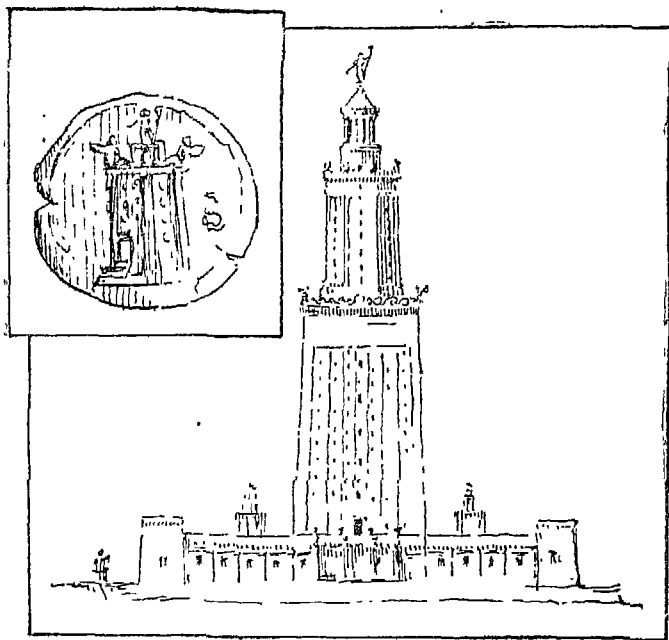


Fig. 43.—The Pharos lighthouse shown on a coin and in restoration.

30 m. high and was topped with a round tower 23 m. high. A large statue of Poseidon, Greek god of the sea, 7 m. high, stood at the apex. Ramps and lifts were used in the interior. Light was

made out of wood-fire in a lantern and magnified through convex lenses or mirrors, so that it was said to reach a distance of 30 km.

**The Museum.** — Ptolemy I founded an academy for scholars, perhaps under the instigation of *Demetrius* of Phalerum, a peripatetic philosopher, on the pattern of Greek philosophical schools. Strabo described it as: "A part of the Palace also being the Museion, having a portico, an exhedra, a large hall where common meals are presented to the philologists attached to the Museion. There is also for the financing of this school common wealth and a special priest for the academy, who was appointed by the king and is now appointed by Caesar". These scholars were not subjected to taxes and were awarded scholarships to study in a calm atmosphere. Many illustrious names of the Museum's scholars are known for different arts and sciences: philosophy literature, history, geography, mathematics.

**The Library.** — This institution was founded by Ptolemy I on the proposal of *Demetrius* of Phalerum and completed by Ptolemy II, as there was only one library at Athens. It seems that it formed at the beginning, part of the Museum. An annex was attached by Ptolemy II to the Serapeum and furnished with 42,800 "volumen". *Demetrius* himself must have gathered some 200,000 volumes and at the end of Ptolemy's reign,

the Library contained 400,000 rolls. Ptolemy III ordered that every traveller entering Alexandria should hand over his manuscripts to be copied and be given these copies.

**The Necropoli.** — Strabo mentions one necropolis (cemetery) to the West of the city. Excavations have brought to light from the Ptolemaic Period extensive cemeteries to the East, for natives and foreigners. It seems that the eastern ones were for Greeks and foreigners. They were of two kinds:

1. — Cemeteries with tombs at ground level, with a tumulus or superstructure bearing funerary stelae.

2. — *Underground necropoli* (*Kom el Shugafa*), with compartments (*loculi*) cut in the rock, in rows in the walls of galleries, at one or more levels.

Bodies were mummified according to the Egyptian tradition, or simply interred in a tomb, over or inside a coffin built to represent a funeral bed (*kline*). Greeks used to burn the body and place the ashes in a three-handled urn, stored in a niche. Such a necropolis is known at Hermoupolis-West (near Ashmuncin), in Middle Egypt.

**The Sema.** — Ptolemy II built a monumental tomb for Alexander in the Macedonian style, surrounded with a wall and having a staircase, a square court, an entrance



hall and an underground sepulchral chamber topped with a funeral temple. The golden sarcophagus was exchanged by Ptolemy XI with another of glass, and the last Cleopatra took the treasure of Alexander and that of the Ptolemies. The tombs of these kings were erected near the Sema, till Ptolemy IV gathered the remains of all his predecessors and Alexander's in one place.

**The Serapeum.** — The temple of the god Serapis, the Pluto or Dionysos of the Greeks, stood, according to a Greek writer, on a high terrace to which a staircase of 100 steps ascended. An enclosure wall surrounded the temple, a chapel of Anubis and the "Small library". The sanctuary of the Serapeum contained a statue of Serapis seated, coloured blue with gold and silver inlays, besides a compound three-headed animal. Two obelisks were erected in the enclosure.

## THE ALEXANDRINE CULTURE

The period between 323 B.C. (death of Alexander) and 30 B.C. (battle of Actium) is known in the history of ancient culture as the "Alexandrine age". Whether the corresponding "Hellenistic culture", which flourished contemporaneously in Asia and Europe, originated in Alexandria has been much debated, although many clues would point in favour of such an origin.

The *language* of the court and high classes was Greek, a common dialect derived from the Athenian one.

**Literature** was international, artificial and attractive, treating lowly themes in the Greek style. **Poetry** was more personal and *Theocritus* from Syracuse (315 or 300 B.C.) invented the "bucolic style", later imitated by Virgil. *Callimachus* from Cyrenaica (310-240 B.C.) was the poet of Ptolemy II and III and perhaps also Librarian, and he wrote 800 works, the most renowned being a romantic description of the hair of Berenice II. His disciple *Apollonios* (295 B.C.) left a huge work of fiction "Argonautics" in poetry.

New **sciences** were studied at Alexandria: philology, grammar and music, while others flourished and were promoted by world-renowned scholars. Geography and astronomy were among the most popular items: *Aristarchos* of Samothrace discovered the movement around the sun, while *Conon*, *Dositheus* and *Hipparchus* are known from II<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. *Eratosthenes* from Cyrenaica, a Librarian, and a well-known geographer who drew a map of the world, discovered its sphericity and measured its diameter.

**Mathematics** were well represented by *Euclides* for geometry; *Archimedes* of Syracuse (287-212 B.C.), the discoverer of many geometrical and physical laws and

inventor of most ingenious mechanical appliances such as the pulley, gear and helicoid; *Apollonios* for trigonometry.

**History** had its scholars: Ptolemy I himself wrote his memoirs, *Hecateus* of Abdera wrote "History of Egypt" and a "History of the Jews", *Manetho* a native priest from Sebennytos, wrote at the request of Ptolemy II, a book about Egyptian history "Aegyptiaca", lost and only known through quotations by the historian Josephus.

**Natural history** was studied by *Theophrastus*. Medicine and surgery were in high honour and "Alexandrine doctor" was a world-wide title. Practice of mummification helped the study of anatomy and the Alexandrine school inherited old traditions.

**Arts.** — The most brilliant and original expression of the Alexandrine culture was its art. Architecture followed the native style for Egyptian temples and houses while Greek cities used Hellenistic types, derived from the Greek classical architecture, but richer and more ornamental. Tombs afford well preserved remains in Alexandria, the Fayum, Hermoupolis-West, and show that both the Egyptian and the Hellenistic styles were used in the same necropolis. The Egyptian capitals were mainly of the composite kind, derived from the open papyrus capital adorned with rows of flowers and

volute. Plans of Greek tombs show the same disposition as in other parts of the Hellenistic world: court, hall and tomb-chamber with funeral bed. Burials could also be in underground chambers with shafts. Walls were decorated with niches, many having a Hellenistic shell, and with a painted plinth in imitation of polychrom marbles.



Fig. 44.—Grotesque terra-cotta.

Egyptian statues of the Alexandrine period show a tinge of Greek influence in the proportions, the dress and the expression of the face. Purely Hellenistic works were also produced, some of great fineness and delicate beauty, rather feminine. A mode of grotesque figures is characteristic of Alexandrine terra-cotta moulding.

Apart from the architectural decorative painting, the Ptolemaic Period left a large collection of mummy-portraits and masks, full of realism and life, large-eyed faces with Greek features and detailed treatment of head-gear and jewellery. These masks will change towards the wax portraits on wooden boards in Roman times (*fig. 47*). Mosaics were also used in scenes. Minor arts, pottery, glassware, bronze and ivory work flourished in the richest and most refined city of that time.

In all its aspects Ptolemaic art was not a new one: Egyptian and Alexandrine arts flourished side by side, with only few reciprocal influences. Such relations can easily be seen in the decoration of the tomb of Petosiris at Hermoupolis-West, where both types are represented in the same scenes (fig. 45).

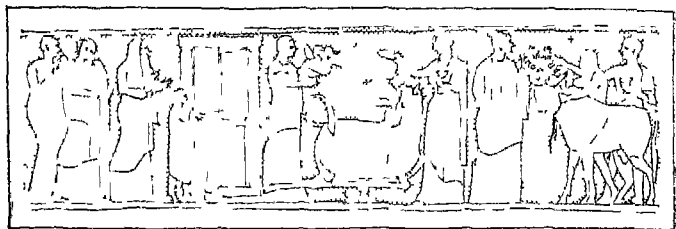


Fig. 45.—Painted low-relief in temple of Petosiris  
(Hermoupolis-West).

As to the Alexandrine style, Schreiber considers it as the prototype of the Hellenistic art and differentiates between an idealistic and a realistic school.

**Social.** — Alexandria, capital of the Hellenistic world and its richest city, was known for the luxury and lust of its inhabitants: the canal coming from Canopus was crowded with boats of revellers. The poorer class of the fellahin and workmen, dependant upon the state or land-owners, were subject to taxes and charges, and their social conditions were not better than before.

**RELIGIONS**

The Egyptian religions flourished with a considerable increase in the cults of animals and animal-headed deities. Animals had their temples, where they were fed and cared for and after their death, mummified and buried in special cemeteries. Thus the crocodile of Sebek was adored in the Fayum, the ibis and monkey of Thot at Ashmunein, the bull of Apis at Memplus. Besides these, the new creed of Serapis, based upon that of an Egyptian god "Usir-hap", who was identified with Pluto, Hades or Dionysos, was firmly established and helped in the good understanding between natives and Greeks. The Ptolemies were offered a cult as the Egyptian Pharaohs in Egyptian temples and they assumed the royal titles and celebrated the commemoration of their sitting upon the throne. The first kings brought back from Syria the statues stolen by the Persians and offered generous donations to the priesthood to gain their backing. In the Greek cities and settlements, kings were honoured as Greek heroes, unofficially at the beginning, then by an official religious decree for king Ptolemy I after his death. It became a tradition that the Ptolemies, at their crowning, should have their cult introduced in temples. Private altars and sanctuaries to the kings were allowed in houses. Here

also no reciprocal influence between Egyptian and Greek cults can be noticed.

Large temples were built to the Egyptian gods, as well as numerous chapels, portals, mammisi or "birth-houses", characteristic of Ptolemaic times.

### THE HELLENIZATION OF EGYPT

Following Alexander's policy, the Ptolemies, who were Macedonian kings and had not a single drop of Egyptian blood, tried to bring Egypt into the Hellenistic world by introducing Greek culture among its native population. Greeks had been established in certain cities in Egypt, under the last dynasties, the most important being Naucratis on the Canopic branch. Pharaoh Psammetichus and Amyrtaeus had had recourse to Greek mercenaries to throw back invaders.

The first Ptolemies encouraged immigration of Greeks and awarded the soldiers plots of land to be cultivated in the Fayum. Thus waste land was arranged, soldiers were always at hand, settled in the country where they helped to spread the Greek culture. However marriage of Greeks and natives in cities was not legal, although many instances of such are known from the papyri. Institutions were founded to establish a Greek formation of the people: gymnasiums were founded, inhabitants of

cities were divided into tribes and families, the new generations into children, ephebes, youths and the older ones into men and elders. Each Greek city was self governed subject to a council of elders (*geroussia*). These towns had their own cults. Responsible people in authority were chosen among the Greeks.

The effect of the cult of Serapis must have been well marked, as documents show that both Egyptians and Greeks held this god in honour. Greek scholars were encouraged to come and settle in Alexandria, and the Museum and Library had a world-wide renown. However, few Egyptians are known to have written in Greek, and Manetho may be considered as an exception. Papyri in the Fayum and Upper Egypt, which are copies of famous Greek classics, prove the diffusion of Greek literature, even in remote towns of the "chora". The official language and that of the higher classes was Greek and this state was to remain under the Roman occupation. Later the Coptic script borrowed the Greek alphabet to write the spoken language. The Greek philosophers of Alexandria had a deep influence on the early Christians of Egypt.

As a whole, the Hellenization of the country cannot be considered as a success. Apart from the limited sphere of the court and high classes of cities, Hellenistic influences did not penetrate deep enough to find any fixation ground. The reasons of this failure must not be sought in the methods of the movement, but rather in the



unfavourable conditions of the people. A traditional dislike of the foreigner and an unreasonable attachment to inheritance, religious, artistic, moral and social, are two factors which acted badly against the hellenization of country people. The mere fact that 20,000 fellahin had been armed and helped to win the victory at Raphia was sufficient to awake the latent nationalism of the whole native population.

### THE INHABITANTS OF ALEXANDRIA

Diodorus states that in his time (60 B.C.), Alexandria had a population of 300,000 and it seems that he considered as such only the "citizens". The whole population including slaves must have amounted to half a million. This was composed of:

1. — The "*Alexandrines*" or citizens of the patrician class, including high officials, priests and other influential members of Greek origin. They were exempted from taxes and charges. As in other Greek cities they were divided into tribes (*phulai*), made up of demes. Some tribes were named after gods as Dionysias, or kings as Ptolemais. The demes of the Dionysias tribe were named after deities depending from Dionysos. The Alexandrine was called according to his tribe or deme.

2. — The “*citizens*” of lower status (*astoi*), who could not be ascribed to any tribe or deme.

3. — The “*Macedonians*”, forming a privileged class of considerable influence at the court as well as in the army, which they commanded. They acclaimed the king at his ascent to the throne and his crowning. A similar class was to appear later in the *Mamelukes*.

4. — The “*Persians*”, who remained in large number from the invaders (525-332 B.C.), of Greek culture and having less advantages than the three preceding classes.

5. — The low “*Greeks*”, immigrants from Greece and Asia Minor, did not enjoy citizenship or its advantages.

6. — The “*Jews*”, numerous since the IIIrd century B.C., dwelt in the Delta quarter, near the Palace, had a constitution of their own and, at the Roman Period, a council of elders (*geroussia*). They enjoyed the same advantages as the Alexandrines, without citizenship. They were active traders, specially in spices, had a cemetery from the reign of Ptolemy II and a large temple from the reign of Ptolemy III.

7. — The “*Egyptians*”, labourers, artisans, soldiers from Rhacotis and Pharos, did not enjoy citizenship or its advantages.

In addition, there was a large number of individuals in slavery or liberated from it.

## THE FAYUM

This wide plateau to the South-West of the apex of the Delta had a lake in its lowest basin and was called in the Egyptian period "The Lake" (*Tashe*), the lake itself being named Moeris. Another Egyptian name for this fertile land, "The Sea" (*Phiom*), was kept through Coptic in the actual form "Fayum". The Greeks translated it into "He Limne". The XIIth Dynasty rulers had fixed their residence in this district and Amenemhat III had carried out irrigation projects and built dams. Ptolemy II Philadelphus drained a large stretch of the province so that the area of the lake diminished and more agricultural land was acquired. It became the richest province under the Ptolemies and the Romans and was heavily extolled.

Its deity was the crocodile-god *Sebek* (*gr.* *Souchos*) and the capital Shedet was called after it, Crocodilopolis. Ptolemy II transformed it into a Greek city by founding new quarters and Greek temples.

The most important institution was the allotment of agricultural land and the grant of plots (*cleroi*) to soldiers so that they might cultivate them and settle there. The architect Cleon prepared the irrigation and drainage projects and Greek towns and villages were

founded according to the plan of Alexandria, on regular patterns. Giceks planted olive-trees.

The district is famous for the large number of papyri brought to light from the remains of the cities on the lake's shore: Crocodilopolis, Ptolemais Hormos, Philadelphia built in honour of Arsinoe Philadelphus, sister and second wife of Ptolemy II, Theadelphia in honour of the "Adelphoi gods" (Ptolemy and Arsinoe), Philoteris, Dionysias and Bacchias to commemorate the descent of the Ptolemies from the two gods Dionysos and Bacchus

At the end of the reign of Ptolemy II, a new name was used for the province "The Arsinoite nome", in honour of Arsinoe. A number of villages bore Greek names: we know about not less than 5 called Ptolemais 2 called Philoteris and Arsinoe, 2 called Berenice and Aphrodite Berenice, 2 called Lysimachis, Philopator and Magais. Names of Greek gods were also used: Hephaistias (from Hephaistos, fire-god), Letopolis (from Leto, mother of Apollo), Athenas (goddess of Athens). Other denominations are also encountered : Euhemeria ("good-day") or Egyptian names: Kerkesuchos, Kerkeosiris; semitic names: Magdola, Samaria or names borrowed from the main cities of the country: Memphis, Athribis, Mendes, Bubastis and Tanis.

The province was divided into three districts (*merides*), known according to their governor's name: *Polemon*, *Heraklides* and *Themistes*. Among the most important papyri discovered in the Fayum is a collection of lettres

between the two architects Cleon, Theodorus and the dioiketes (minister of finances) Apollonios. They give a most vivid picture of life at that time and valuable material about the finances of the government and wealthy land-owners. From these we know of a dispute between Cleon and one of his greek employees, Clearchus, a letter of threats from the secretary of Apollonios, Zeno to Cleon because he had not carried out the arrangements at a canal in Apollonios' domain.

Strabo, who visited the Fayum in Roman Period (24 B.C.), describes the irrigation mechanism: "Owing to its size and depth Lake Moeris is able to receive the excess of water during the inundation, preventing the overflowing of houses and crops; but later, when the water subsides and after the lake has given up its excess through the same canal (Bahr Yusuf), both it and the canal retain enough water for irrigation purposes".

At Soknepaiou Nesos (Dimeh) is a temple of Sokene-paios, a form of the crocodile-god, built under the Ptolemies. At Dionysias (Qasr Qarun) there is a temple of late Ptolemaic date and two smaller chapels. At Euhemeria (Qasr el Banat) are the remains of a Suchos temple.

**APOLLONIOS THE DIOIKETES**

Apollonios was a characteristic figure of the early Ptolemaic Period. He came from Greece or Caria in Asia Minor, was appointed in 268-267 dioiketes or minister of finances and remained in his post till the end of the reign of Ptolemy II. He was however deprived of both post and wealth by Ptolemy III. According to the Zeno papyri he was nearly as powerful as the king, owning a house similar to the royal palace, keeping a manager or "econom" who was Zeno, a director of the treasury, a henchman of the estate, a secretary, a commander of the fleet, a chief of the supply and an army of slaves.

Besides his activities for the benefit of the king, he did not forget his own, and his commercial fleets navigated on the Nile and the sea and carried goods to Palestine Syria, and Asia Minor. He traded in forbidden imports such as slaves, textiles, Syrian oil. He had been given agricultural land as gift, amounting to about 10,500 arouras (27 million square metres) in the Fayum, with the village of Philadelphia.

## THE GOVERNMENT

**Justice.** — The Greeks introduced their judicial system. Laws were decreed by the king who issued also rescripts (*diagrammata*) or edicts (*prostigmata*). The native law also was still in force under the name of "laws of the country". Some reciprocal influence of the two systems can be traced, specially in cases dealing with marriage. Justice was headed by a minister of Justice (*archidikastes*) at Alexandria.

1. — *The native system.* Egyptians continued to write their documents in demotic by means of the monographoi scribes. Tribunals consisted of Egyptian judges (*laokritai*). A decree of Ptolemy VII (118 B.C.) stated the authority of Greek and Egyptian tribunals. Egyptian tribunals judged on demotic documents and between Egyptians, the Greek ones on Greek documents.

2. — *The Greek system.* Tribunals that looked into cases between Greeks, administered justice in the name of the king and depended from the nomes. They circulated in the country and seem to have been instituted by Ptolemy II. Any responsible official could receive complaints.

3. — A third system, of *mixed courts*, dealt with cases between Egyptians and Greeks.

**Execution of Judgements and Police.** — There was a police, including a mounted corps for deserts. Every village had its police-chief (*archiphulakes*) who was under the police of the nome. All officers were Greek at first, but Egyptians were gradually appointed.

The Police were also responsible for the collection of taxes, buying goods for the government and inspection of harvests in the royal domains. The policeman was paid in kind, by the gift of a plot of arable land (*cleros*) smaller than that of the Macedonian soldier (10 arouras) or in money. On the canals there were special police on boats.

**The Army.** — The land army consisted of three different corps:

1. — The regular soldiers, Macedonian or Greek, armed in the Macedonian style, fought at the head of the armies. Special treatment was given to the mounted corps.

2. — Mercenaries from different countries, Crete, Thracia, who registered in the bodyguard of Ptolemy IV, who were awarded agricultural plots after the battle of Raphia.

3. — Egyptians (*machimoi*), soldiers of the third degree, who rarely fought in battles.



The Greck and Macedonian soldier was awarded a plot (*cleros*) for his lifetime, averaging from 25 to 100 arouras in area, according to his grade and arm. Some plots for officers could reach 10,000 arouras in the Fayum. Egyptian soldiers were given only 5-7 arouras.

The soldier had to cultivate the land and could not dispose of it, for on his death it returned to the king. He was allowed to live in Egyptian cultivators' houses but could not let this dwelling.

Under Ptol my III he was allowed to let the plot. This system had the advantages of fixing the soldiers to the country, cultivating the soil and hellenizing the people.

**Evolution of the Plot System.** — 1.—The plot was not hereditary at the beginning. In case the kleruch had a son able for service, this plot was passed to him.

2. — Between years 9 of Ptolemy III and 5 of Ptolemy IV the plot became hereditary for all the sons of the kleruch, whatever their age.

3. — It seems that in the first century, the *cleros* became hereditary for all the relatives of the soldier, in case he left no son.

The children of foreign soldiers in Egypt were called "of the descendants" (*epigones*). The soldiers who were awarded plots for cultivation were kleruchs. At the end of the IIIrd century appeared the name "katoichos"

(settler) and it was used instead of kleruch for Greeks and Macedonians while this was reserved for Egyptians.

**The Fleet.** -- Ptolemy II had a navy of 336 ships under the command of the admirals (*navarchoi*). Crews were fellahin and soldiers of the fleet, Egyptian and Greek.

**Elephants.** -- Elephants were used in the Ptolemaic army, as they had been used in India during Alexander's campaign. Regular expeditions were sent by Ptolemy II to Central Africa and we know of two chiefs of such expeditions, *Satyros* and *Eumedes*, who went as far as the country of the Troglodytes and Somaliland.

Military stations were founded on the shores of the Red Sea: Ptolemais Theron ("of the beasts", near Suakim), Berenice Panchrusos ("all in gold") and Arsinoe (near Bab el Mandeb). At Raphia the African elephants of Ptolemy IV were defeated by the Asiatic ones of Antiochus, which were of a species that could be trained much more easily.

**The Nomes.** -- The Greeks called the districts of Egypt "nomes" (parts). In ancient times they were called "hesepu" or "spat" and numbered 22 in Upper Egypt and 20 in Lower Egypt. It was in the reign of Ptolemy II that a Greek general was joined to the native nomarch, and he ultimately replaced him. In the second century he had an assistant (*upostrategos*) and directed a superintendant for justice (*epistates*) and for police.

(*epistates phulakitai*); he had a director of finances (*epimeletes*) with a director of the treasury (*oikonomos*), an inspector (*antigraphus*) and a royal scribe (*basilicogrammateus*). The nome was divided into districts (*topoi*) and these into villages (*komai*) under komarchai. Scribes were helping officials, scribes of the topos (*topogrammateus*) and of the kome (*komogrammateus*). They were mostly Greeks and studied finances and taxation documents.

## FINANCES

**The Agricultural Land System.** — Legally the pharaoh was the owner of the whole land of Egypt. Although the revenue was nominally due to him, yet, in the Ptolemaic Period, it was perceived in various ways according to the kinds of lands :

1. — *Royal land (basilike ge)* was directly exploited by the king through his officials and worked by the royal cultivators (*basilikoi georgoi*).

2. — *Land in relinquishment (ge en aphesei)*, which was the remaining land and was subdivided into four kinds, given by the king to those who were to cultivate it:

a) *Sacred land (iera ge)* for temples.

b) Plots for soldiers (*kleruchoi*) who cultivated them.

- c) *Gifts (doreai or en dorea)* to high officials and favourites, during their lifetime. Apollonios was the most famous of those.
- d) *Private land (ge idiotike)*, given to private people to be cultivated, against payment of lease in kind, and which became hereditary.

The difference between the gift and the private lands is that certain advantages were attached to the former: freedom from taxes, possibility of cultivating corn. It was leased in small plots to cultivators. The same system was used with royal cultivators in the royal domains.

The result of such an agricultural system was that the king remained owner of the whole land, supervising cultures and breeding of stock: cattle, sheep, swine, geese. In addition, he had monopolies over a large part of the agricultural and industrial productions.

A special tax (*phoros*) was levied upon every kind of assignment so that the system was very productive to the royal treasury. The native had nearly no independence left, for he was engaged in royal or rich owners' domains. However, he was favoured with some advantages, as that of royal advances in grain for sowing, or money.

Egypt knew a period of prosperity in agriculture and industry as an immediate result of this system. The cultivator and the workman participated also in the general profit.

**Financial Organization.** — The expenses of the Ptolemaic state were heavy, and, for the balance in the financial budget, the sources of income had to be increased. Thus was introduced the most efficient and elaborate financial system which Egypt ever knew.

The royal treasury was filled through the banks and the magazines of the country, the cities and villages where income was gathered in money and kind, as natural products of the soil. Besides the direct income of the royal land, the treasury had other profits: monopolies and rents. Taxes were paid to the government treasury.

The many problems appeared as a result of the introduction of Greeks into various government offices, such as:

1. — Supply of those Greeks, officials or traders, with what was necessary.
2. — Preservation of the small amount of money existing in the country and introducing more from outside.
3. — Payment of the agricultural borrowings afforded to Greeks as well as taxes and rents.

Ptolemies endeavoured to develop foreign trade and export in order to gather the largest amount of foreign coins. As to the payment of individual debts, the individual was indirectly responsible through the farmer. And since he had no other source of wealth than the

produce of this work, the king had to direct the production and organize laws.

This financial policy is illustrated in the time of Ptolemy III, when kleruchs were ordered to execute some works and were given loans to help them. These were to be paid half in the second year in kind, as amounts of oil seeds to be sent to the royal storehouses.

As a result of this system, the royal land was exploited, the newcomers who settled in Egypt were supplied with food and the king could drain money from outside.

## I. MONOPOLIES

Monopolies can be studied according to their kind:

1. — Monopolies for breeding.
2. — Industrial monopolies.
3. — Monopolies in raw materials.

1. **Monopolies of Breeding.** The study of monopolies prove that the financial policy of the Ptolemies was not stiff, using only one method of profit, but complex, with original ways adapted to the problems. Methods of deriving profit from breeding varied according to the stock. For animals used in the fields, buffalo, ass, horse, camel, the oikonomos proceeded according to a census. Animals of the royal estate were

bred by the royal cultivators and the kleruchs against payment. Some cultivators kept their own stock and there were temples that rented their own. War horses were rarely used for agricultural purposes and were bred by soldiers who had to pay a tax for using royal horses.

The king owned stocks which he hired out. In the third century, individuals had their own stock, and rents were in kind, as animals born during the year, or in money. There was no monopoly on the sale of products: hides, cheese, milk, meat. Apollonios had swine bred by special people who paid the rent in kind (*phoros*) or by labourers. Trade in swine was free, but subject to various taxes. The breeders of swine were exempted from providing dwellings for officials or soldiers of the king. It seems that the same favour was offered to the textile manufacturers, workmen in oil-presses and brewers.

There was a tax to be paid on all animals according to a census. It had as object to direct breeding according to the need, estimation of areas to be left for hay, and estimation of taxes on oxen, camels, sheep, swine. This tax did not represent a rent on the land cultivated in pastures. The royal cultivators grazed their herds on the swamps and the kleruchs on their plots. Taxes were paid per head of cattle and in money. Only the temples were exempted from them. Another tax was for guards, on all animals.

There was also a special tax of one tenth on cows.

offered in temples. A permit for selling meat was to be paid for; hides to be tanned were also subjected to regulations. Bee keeping was most important since it was the source of sugar and wax in ancient times. It was subject to a tax of one fourth, while its trade was free and protected by a tax on imported honey of one fourth. Dove breeding was free, subject to a tax of one third. Geese were bred by royal servants or rented to farmers paying a tax and who were not allowed to move from one district to another.

Hunting was supervised by the king.

2. **Industrial Monopolies** : could be absolute, restricted or fictitious.

a) *ABSOLUTE* for oil and textiles.

*Oil monopoly* was subjected to regulations showing that the king supervised the cultivation of oil plants and the preparation of oil and its sale. The main oil-plants: sesame, croton, ricinus and linseed, were cultivated according to an area scheme for every nome, and tax-collecting was farmed to the highest bidder. Amounts of seeds were awarded as lease to the farmer. Seeds were handed over to the cultivators 60 days before the harvest and they had to pay a tax of one fourth. Corn was sent by the assistants of the oikonomos to the corn-storehouses under the supervision of the *sitologi*.

All oil-presses were under the direction of the king,



except those of the temples, which were subject to his supervision and inspection. The oikonomos provided the manufacturers with the necessary amount of seeds. Workmen received fees proportional to the output and they had extra pay for any production in excess. They could not move from their district. Plants were closed and their doors sealed after pressing-season.

The selling of oil was rented by bidding, for a certain amount stated in the contract; retail prices fixed by the king were usually higher than those outside the country, which asked for special laws forbidding the import of foreign oil except to the royal storehouses.

Besides taxes on import oil, there were others on raw materials and very likely also on the consumer. Sesame oil was the best for cooking purposes while others of inferior quality were used for lighting, preparing medicines, paints, perfumes, soap and in sports.

*Textile monopoly* was similar, in case of linen and wool, to that of oil. Areas cultivated in linen were fixed yearly and seeds were distributed to the cultivators. Wool was free, but imported wool was subject to 20 per cent custom duties.

Textile manufacturing was inspected by the oikonomos, who made sure that the laws were enforced, in royal or private plants. The manufacturers of the temples had to present the king with a certain amount of fine stuff (*byssos*), of the kind used for temple statues and mummies. That amount was reduced to one third

in the reign of Ptolemy V and Ptolemy VII, among other concessions awarded to the priesthood. Taxes on looms and others on raw materials are known.

b) *REDUCED MONOPOLIES* included those of wine and fish.

The king and the royal family, as well as private people, owned vines and fruit-trees. It seems that such a culture gave an opportunity to the cultivator to own the land and pass it to his inheritors. The king supervised the cultures, exempted them at the beginning from taxes and reduced those in the barren lands of the South from one sixth to one tenth. New species of vines were imported.

Originally the wine tax (*apomoira*) was an offering to the gods. In year 23 of Ptolemy II this tax was levied by the clergy to be presented to the goddess Arsinoë and it amounted to one sixth of the production. The *apomoira* was gathered in kind in the villages, or in money to be paid to the royal magazines. This tax was extended for the benefit of the Philadelphoi gods, then for the Philopators gods.

Besides this tax used for religious purposes, the producer had to pay other taxes to the king per area-unit of land in vine, for maintenance of dykes and for guards.

Wine-trade was free and amounts were imported, subject to custom-duties one third to half their value. Transit of wine between districts was also subject to taxes.

It seems that fish were subject to the same regulations as those for oil, the king renting the fisheries to responsible farmers or to fishermen. Royal fisheries existed in the Fayum, exploited by paid fishermen. Every part of fishermen was assigned a fixed area for at least one month. Individual fishermen had to pay a tax of one fourth and worked mostly in Upper Egypt. On fish and meat, there was a tax of one fourth.

c) *FICTITIOUS MONOPOLIES* were illustrated by that of beer, prepared with oats. Breweries were let by bidding and the farmer had to transform the quantity of oats he received against paying a monthly rent to the royal treasury and was dispensed from the charge of offering inhabitation to soldiers. Temples had their own breweries. There was a tax on beer consumption, calculated per head.

3. **Monopolies of Raw Materials.** Materials which were found in quarries such as stone, salt and minerals or grew freely such as wood and papyri, were subject to monopolies.

*STONE QUARRIES.* — Private buildings were of brick and only public ones were of stone: granite, sandstone, basalt and limestone. The king reserved quarries for his use and exploited them through special farmers who had to quarry certain quantities handed over to

experts. The farmer worked by himself or rented labourers and used tools from the royal magazines, under the supervision of the architect of the nome. Sometimes prisoners were sent by the king.

*SALT.* — It seems that salt was king's property and its trade was restricted. It was driven from sea-basins in the Delta and from quarries. The royal storehouses sold it at auctions and retail prices were fixed by the king. A special salt-tax was levied per head, less for women than for men and half for slaves.

*MINERALS.* — Gold was exploited since the most ancient times and the Ptolemies worked quarries at Wadi-el-Fawakhir, near Wadi-el-Hammamat and in the Eastern Desert, near Edfu and in Nubia. Silver was withdrawn from gold ores. Brass was found in Cyprus and at Philoteris, on the Moeris Sea. Emerald was brought from the Eastern Desert and semi-precious stones from an island in the Red Sea, opposite to Aswan.

Prisoners of war and others were employed to cut quartz veins and the stones were pounded into fine powder in mills worked by old men and women. The powder was washed and mixed with lead, bran and salt in earthenware vessels sealed with mud and then heated for 5 days. Gold was however insufficient to pay the imports.

Iron, a metal only known in Egypt since the New Kingdom, was imported and it seems that the mild Ptolemaic policy towards Rome and Carthage was due to need of Roman iron and Carthaginian tin. Implements were loaned to labourers and fellahin.

*WOOD.* — This rare material was always imported from abroad, Syria or Armenia. The Ptolemies planted trees in their domains under the superintendence of the oikonomos and the farmer. Trees were to be planted in "gift-land" and fines were put against those who did not plant, or fell trees. Taxes were levied on tree-felling. Architectural timber was imported from Cyprus

*PAPYRUS.* — This most useful plant grew wild in the Delta swamps and the Fayum. Stalks were cut at certain moments and had to be worked when still green, on the spot. "Royal papyrus" was sold to farmers by auction. The king sold the best quality of paper for scribes and supervised the sale of other qualities. Export regulations are not known.

## II. RENTS

Rents were paid on private land (*ge en idiotike*), rented to private people, in kind, as part of the agricultural produce. They were usually planted with date-palms vines or fruit-trees.

### III. TAXES

Taxes were numerous, on the various activities of life. They were direct, indirect or assumed the aspect of charges.

1. — *DIRECT TAXES*. Nearly everything was subject to a tax in the Ptolemaic system:

a) Poll-tax, paid by every male Egyptian, except the native priests.

b) Tax on property, land or house, paid in kind for corn-fields and in money for fruit-trees and vines.

c) Tax on capital, including implements, animals, servants and slaves.

d) Tax on societies.

e) Industrial taxes, as patent rights on the sale of industrial products, or right of occupying a certain place in the market, or permits.

f) Tax on the kleruch.

g) Tax on the priest.

A special luxury tax may have existed, similar to that of income.

2. — *INDIRECT TAXES.*

a) Customs duties had to be paid at ports and frontiers on imports and exports, and also for transit between Upper and Middle Egypt, at Hermoupolis and between nomes. There was a tax on transports: camels.

b) Taxes were levied on sales, divisions, gifts, amounting to 10 per cent from the time of Psammetichus I (VIIth century B.C.) and reduced from the IIInd century to 5 per cent. Taxes were also due on transfer of property, on renting, by traders and owners.

c) Contracts, receipts and inheritance were taxed.

3. — *CHARGES.* Connected with taxes are charges as statute labour (*corvée*) due by Egyptians, to arrange dykes or afford dwelling to Greek soldiers, officials in peace time or war.

**Special Taxes.** These were due for surveying, royal storehouse, police, special offices and hunting.

**Special Revenues.** Under this item come the supplementary taxes, fines and seized property. They were levied through the *oikonomos* in the nome by order of the *praktors*. Foreign provinces paid taxes annually. Country people had to afford dwelling and entertainment for the king, and his suite, when they travelled and even for officials or strangers.

## COLLECTIONS OF TAXES

The method of tax-collecting differs according to the nature of the taxes:

a) Taxes in kind on corn-land were sent to the royal storehouses (*thesouroi*) in the cities or villages, under the supervision of the sitologoi. Ostraca give the receipts which they prepared for the cultivators. Corn was then transported on royal boats to Alexandria.

b) Taxes paid in money were sent to the banks (*trapezai*) in villages and cities, capitals of the nomes, directed by the royal bankers. Hence it was transferred to the royal bank at Alexandria.

Banks were responsible for the collection of taxes and the payment of wages and expenses due by the government. Taxes were not collected directly by officials but through a method introduced by the Ptolemies and inspired from that of the Greek cities. This was renting the supervision of collecting the taxes yearly at public auctions to individuals or societies. They collected money or produce from the cultivators, paid to the bank of the nome a monthly rent and presented their books to the oikonomos. The benefit



they derived from this system amounted to the difference between the rent and the sum they collected. A list of taxes was exposed in Greek and Egyptian in the office of the collector during the first 10 days. As the government met with difficulties in finding farmers for tax-collection it awarded, beside benefit, a percentage (*opsonion*) on the total taxes, amounting to 5 per cent in the IIIrd century, and 10 per cent in the IInd century B.C.

This system of exaction produced excellent results for the king. Revenue amounted in Ptolemy II's reign to 14,800 talents of silver (88,800,000 golden francs).

## TRADE

*Besides the monopolies, rents, taxes, as source of revenue, there were the benefits derived from trade, either through export of Egyptian goods, or in transit trade.*

*EXTERNAL TRADE.* — Many goods were exported, including agricultural produce as corn, manufactured objects as paper, glass, textiles, materials coming from the Indies or Arabia, such as spices, myrrh, incense, which were transformed in Egypt into preparations and perfumes. Alexandria was the main gate of Egypt and world-renowned for its exports which exceeded its

imports. Among the main products were paper, glass, linen textiles, carpets, ivory objects, jewellery, corn, toys, salted meat, slaves, wild beasts and manuscripts,

Imports included wood from Syria, marble, wine, Tyrian purple for dying, textiles and painted earthenware vessels from Rhodes, Cnidos, Thassos, Crete.

That the land-route to the Indies passed through Palestine explains the stubbornness of the Ptolemies in trying to keep this land in their hands. Egypt sent to the southern countries wine, textiles, oil and metal implements for war such as arms, and glass.

The traffic with the Red Sea followed two routes:

a) *The sea route.* — Ptolemy II restored the ancient canal excavated by Nechao and Darius I, which communicated from the eastern branch of the Nile, through the Bitter Lakes, with the Red Sea (Ter'at el Isma'iliyah in the Wadi Tumilat). He founded the city of Arsinoe (near Suez) at the mouth of the canal.

b) *The land-route.* — Ptolemy II founded on the shores of the Red Sea the ports of Myos-Hormos (South of Suez), Philotera connected to Kaenopolis (Qena) by means of a desert route for caravans, Berenice at the level of Syene, also connected to Coptos by a desert route with stations and cisterns for rain-water.

Ptolemy II opened trade transactions with the capitals of Napata and Meroe in the Nubian Kingdom and also with Aksum and its port Adulis in Ethiopia.

Custom-duties varied according to the nature of the imports: 5 per cent on oil, on condition that they should be sold directly to the king at fixed prices, 33 per cent on Greek wine and dried figs, 25 per cent on Greek honey and hog meat, venison, walnuts, sponges, 20 per cent on wool. Supplementary taxes were levied as the one for the pharos at Alexandria.

Postal exchanges were instituted by Ptolemy II, rapid for letters and slow for goods.

### **PTOLEMY V EPIPHANUS**

(203 - 181 B.C.)

At the death of Ptolemy IV Philopator, Agathocles and Sosibios planned to murder queen Arsinoe, guardian of the young king who was kept in the palace. Although some correspondence relative to the murder fell into strangers' hands, yet the queen was killed and Sosibios and Agathocles divulged the death of the two kings in 203 B.C. The young boy of five was called king with the two murderers as guardians. They succeeded for some time to keep their influence but were aware of the dangers that surrounded their situation. Antiochos had tried to enter Coele-Syria and native riots were still alive in Upper Egypt. Sosibios and Agathocles sent the other members of the plot to foreign posts,

distributed mercenaries in Upper Egypt and sent ambassadors to Antiochos to remind him of the treaty.

In spite of this policy the Alexandrine people revolted under the leadership of general *Tlepolemus* of Pelusium and the Macedonian army joined the movement, besieged the palace and took the young king. The son of Sosibios made him allow the mob try his mother's murderers and thus Agathocles, Agathoclea, Philamon and his wife were all put to death.

Tlepolemus acted as regent but had not the qualities of a politician. Antiochus and Philip of Macedonia united against Egypt's dominions and the Egyptian garrisons were thrown out of Thracia, Samos was captured by the Macedonian fleet and Coele-Syria and Gaza were occupied by Antiochus.

An embassy from Rome under Marcus Emilius Lepidus came to announce the victory over Carthage, but aimed at a secret study of the situation in the Middle-East.

Tlepolemus was soon replaced by *Aristomenes* with *Scopas* as commander of the army. He captured some Palestinian cities and threw out the Syrians into Lebanon. Antiochus however was victorious and definitely took over Coele-Syria.

Scopas was killed on account of his rebellion against Aristomenes. The enthronement of the young king of twelve was then celebrated and he was given the title of "Epiphanes" (apparent god), a translation of an Egyptian title. Greek and Egyptian feasts were

celebrated at Memphis. The two centres of nationalistic revolts, Abydos and Lycopolis in the Delta, were captured and the rioters cruelly punished. Favours were bestowed upon the native priesthood, according to the Rosetta Stone.

Foreign policy saw bad relations with Nubia and war with Ethiopia, while, according to a peace treaty with Antiochus, his daughter Cleopatra married Ptolemy V at Raphia (193-192). Egypt followed a peaceful policy towards Rome, and Aristomenes, who did not approve of it, was ordered to drink poison. Egypt's gifts of corn and money were not accepted by Rome, who did not help, as Egypt wished, against Antiochus. She defeated this king in Asia and took his dominions, disregarding Egypt.

*Polycrates* succeeded in quelling the nationalists' revolts in Upper Egypt (184-183) and their leaders were captured after their submission and treacherously treated. Polycrates altered his policy of peace towards Rome but was prevented from carrying it further by the king's death.

Three main institutions date from this reign:

- 1.) a priestess of Arsinoe Philopator.
- 2.) new titles in the royal court, such as "parent", "chief of bodyguard", "first friend", "friend" and "diadochus".
- 3.) the strategos of the Thebaid nome became chief-commander of Upper Egypt, a change intended to help the repression of revolts,

**PTOLEMY VI PHILOMETOR**

(181-145 B.C.)

Cleopatra became regent, her son being only 5 or 9 years old, and Egypt passed through a period of peace (182-172 B.C.), keeping her relations with Rome and Syria, where Antiochus IV had taken by force the succession of Seleucos IV. At the queen's death two ancient slaves of the palace, *Eulaeus* and *Lenaeus*, took the power and organized the crowning of the king, then 16 years old, at which he was given the title of "Philometor" (mother-loving), and he married his younger sister Cleopatra II.

An expedition against Syria was thrown back by Antiochus, who took Pelusium and reached Memphis. Ptolemy fled by sea to the island of Samothrace but was brought back by the Syrians. Antiochus was crowned Pharaoh at Memphis. The two governors were overthrown and the young brother of the king placed on the throne. He appointed *Comanos* and *Cineas*, ministers in the besieged Alexandria, while Antiochus recognized Ptolemy Philometor at Memphis. After Antiochus' return to Syria the two kings agreed to reign together at Alexandria, a decision which brought Antiochus back. He was however ordered, by a delegate of the Roman Senate, to leave the country at once.

The two brothers reigned together for five years, during which the third factor of the deterioration of the Ptolemaic Empire appeared. Besides the rebirth of the nationalistic movement and the increasing power of the ennuuchs in the palace, there appeared internal dissensions in the royal family. Ptolemy Philometor was beloved while his brother was disliked on account of his harshness, although backed by the people. The Egyptian *Petosarapis* attempted to raise the mob against Philometor but failed.

Ptolemy the younger raised a riot against his brother, who fled to the Roman Senate. The Senate decided that he should return to his throne, while his younger brother would reign over Cyrenaica, which enforced a division in favour of Roman policy (163 B.C.).

In the system of justice, a new arrangement favoured the use of Greek scribes (*agoranomoi*), instead of native ones (*monographoi*), since a Greek text had to be presented with the demotic document and the signature of the Greek scribe replaced witnesses.

Ptolemy the younger ("the brother") asked for Cyprus and went to the Roman Senate who approved his claim, but did not enforce it against Philometor's will. Another attempt, 8 years later, was made and he showed to the Senate wounds inflicted upon him by murderers sent by his brother! Nothing, however, ensued and the two brothers were reconciled. The Syrian affair gave rise to wars. Demetrios was not wanted as king by the Romans on account of his policy regarding Cyprus and

he was replaced by Alexander Bala, with the help of the Egyptian army. This inefficient king was soon replaced by the son of Demetrios, helped by an army commanded by Philometor, who died in the battle.

## PTOLEMY VII EVERGETES II

(145-116 B.C.)

Cleopatra II governed with her small son after the sudden death of Ptolemy VI. The followers of Ptolemy 'the Brother', king of Cyrenaica, claimed the throne while those of the late king endeavoured to reform the army. The Roman partisan of the Cyrenaican king, Lucius Minutius Thermus and a deputation at Alexandria, succeeded in allowing Ptolemy the Brother to sit on the throne. He married his widowed sister, Cleopatra, and killed her boy. A son was born to him by Cleopatra, called *Memphites*, during the festivities of the crowning at Memphis. The king married the daughter of his sister-wife, called also Cleopatra and nicknamed "the Wife". This state could but lead to trouble and the Alexandrines revolted. Ptolemy was obliged to flee to Cyprus with Cleopatra III, her children and Memphites, and he sent for a son he had in Cyrenaica and who was sought as king by the Alexandrines and killed



him in Cyprus. Memphites was the next to be murdered and his body sent in pieces to his mother.

Ptolemy succeeded in regaining Alexandria and the Fayum in 129. Cleopatra II had sought refuge near her son-in-law Demetrios of Syria, who sent an army against Ptolemy, but he was defeated and killed and Cleopatra reconciled with her brother.

Trouble followed and a decree issued by the three governors (*Tebtynis Papyrus*) in 118 B.C. which ascertained the property of those who had been awarded gift-land by either the king or Cleopatra II, and ordered various measures to quell the nationalistic movement as the remittance of taxes, licences, charges, favours to the priesthood, insurances to cultivators, traders and labourers against officials.

**PTOLEMY VIII SOTER I**  
**and**  
**PTOLEMY IX ALEXANDER**  
(116- -90 B.C.)

The testament of Ptolemy VII specified that *Apion*, his son from his favourite Eirene, should reign over Cyrenaica, of which he had been appointed viceroy before the king's death. The throne should be left to Cleopatra III and any of her children as associate. She

chose Alexander, but at the opposition of the Alexandrines her first son who lived in Cyprus was crowned and given the name of Ptolemy Philometor Soter II. Under his mother's pressure he left his sister-wife and married his younger sister *Cleopatra Selene*.

The queen-mother sent her son Alexander to Cyprus as viceroy. An incident showing the wily mentality of the women of the Ptolemaic Dynasty occurred at that time: Cleopatra IV, first wife of Ptolemy VIII went to Cyprus, raised an army, then going to Syria, she proposed to Antiochus that he should marry her and lead this army. Antiochus VIII, who had married Cleopatra Tryphaena had been obliged to flee and accepted. Both sisters Cleopatra Tryphaena and Cleopatra IV died in the battle.

A Roman senator, Lucius Memmius, visited Egypt as a tourist and papyri (112 B.C.) show the orders issued to an official in the Fayum to prepare his visit and entertainment, showing the servile attitude towards the Romans.

Cleopatra the Mother accused her son of poisoning her and the Alexandrines rioted. Ptolemy had to flee by sea and the queen associated with her second son Alexander, sent an army against Ptolemy in Cyprus. This army, however, did not fight. The forces of Cleopatra III and her ally Antiochus Grypus clashed with those of Soter and Antiochus Cyzicene in Palestine without result.

After the death of Cleopatra III, Alexander associated with Berenice, his brother's daughter (101-81 B.C.).

Ptolemy Apion died, bequeathing Cyrenaica to the Romans, who did not govern it immediately as a colony, but seized the crown's possessions, levied taxes on the culture of silphium, while the cities were left to govern themselves. It was not till 74 B.C. that Cyrenaica became a Roman province, the first part of the Ptolemaic empire to pass to the Romans.

The army revolted against Alexander and he had to flee to Syria. He returned with an army of mercenaries whom he paid with the golden sarcophagus of Alexander the Great. The Alexandrines revolted again and he fled with Berenice and was killed (88 B.C.)

Soter came from Cyprus and reigned over Egypt and Cyprus, together with Berenice, his only child. The nationalistic raisings in Upper Egypt were not quelled for three years. The king of Pontus organized a campaign against the Romans and defeated one of their generals. Athens which had joined him against the Romans was besieged by Sulla, but Egypt did not help.

### **BERENICE III, PTOLEMY X ALEXANDER II, PTOLEMY XI AULETES**

(80-51 B.C.)

Berenice reigned alone. Sulla, who governed at Rome sent his protégé Ptolemy X to reign with the widowed queen and marry her, an elderly cousin. He murdered

her only three weeks after, but was in turn killed by the angry Alexandrines.

Two illegal sons of Ptolemy VIII Soter II by a concubine governed Egypt and Cyprus. Ptolemy XI, nicknamed "Auletes" (fluteplayer), married Cleopatra Tryphaena and was crowned pharaoh, curiously enough at Alexandria, as we know from the stela of the 14 years old high-priest at Memphis: "I went to the residence of the kings of the Ionians, which is on the shores of the great sea, west of Rhacoti".

Rome did not acknowledge the new king and produced a testament of Ptolemy X giving over Egypt to the Romans nor did she consider the claims of the two sons of Cleopatra Selene and Antiochus, who went from Syria to Rome for this purpose. The question was dependant on political influences, the aristocratic party rejecting the project of the democrats to attach Egypt as a Roman province.

Ptolemy Auletes sent an army of 8,000 horsemen to Pompeus, to help him against Mithridates in Palestine, a gesture which excited the discontent of the Alexandrines. The king succeeded however in coming to an agreement with Julius Caesar (59 B.C.), chief of the democratic party, against a gift of 6,000 talents and he made Rome recognize Ptolemy Auletes "king of Egypt" and "ally and friend of the Roman People".

In 58 B.C. Rome decreed the appropriation of Cyprus and the philosopher Cato went to the island to make

its king Ptolemy acknowledge the authority of Rome and he offered him a religious office. The king committed suicide and Cato sent his treasures to Rome.

The Alexandrines' discontent against Ptolemy increased and he went to seek help at Rome and he met Cato at Rhodes. Cleopatra Tryphaena was proclaimed queen by the Alexandrines, to reign with Berenice IV, daughter of Auletes. But she died one year later and Berenice IV was sole queen.

Ptolemy Auletes spent his time (58-57 B.C.) at Rome and he succeeded in having a decree ordering an armed expedition to put him upon the throne. He secured Aulus Gabinius, consul of Syria, as its leader and they entered Egypt in 55 B.C. The Egyptians did not offer any opposition and Ptolemy regained the throne and murdered his daughter Berenice. Gabinius was tried for having accepted the command of such an expedition and exiled. Of Ptolemy's remaining children Cleopatra was the eldest, being fourteen, and was the famous queen with whom the Ptolemaic Dynasty would soon end. Ptolemy owed money to many Romans and he appointed *Rabirius Postumus* dioiketes, who remained in his post for only one year. Egypt was at that time occupied by a Roman army and its finances were in the hands of the Romans. This could only lead to total submission of the country to Rome.

## CLEOPATRA VII, PTOLEMY XII, PTOLEMY XIII, PTOLEMY XIV

(51-30 B.C.)

Cleopatra became queen of a weak and lonely Egypt, occupied by a Roman army garrisoned near Alexandria. She was about 16 and combined with her younger brother under the name of Ptolemy XII. The government was in the hands of the ennuich *Potinus*, the teacher

of the king, Theodotos of Chios and the chief commander *Achillas* the "Egyptian". The Roman army settled and founded a class of *katoichoi*.



Fig. 47—Coin of  
Cleopatra VII

During the contest between Pompey and Caesar, Pompey's son came to Alexandria (49 B.C.) asking for help and was offered 50 vessels, corn and 500 soldiers from Gabinius' army.

Cleopatra VII was obliged to flee, when she quarrelled with the three governors and raised an army to fight her brother at Pelusium. In the meantime Pompey had been defeated; and fleeing, he was murdered in his boat

by order of Achillas. Cæsar, in pursuit anchored his fleet in front of Alexandria, settled in the palace and sent for the queen and king. The king came with Potinus while Cleopatra with Apollodorus, came by sea from Sicily and entered the palace, wrapped in a carpet. They were reconciled. An army led by Achillas besieged the capital and Caesar fortified himself in it, burning part of his fleet. The flames spread to the Library and destroyed part of the books.

Arsinoe, the younger sister of Cleopatra, fled to Achillas but soon murdered him. The situation of the besieged grew worse on account of watershortage. Wells were bored and the young Ptolemy was sent to the besieging army. Mithridates, entering by Pelusium, brought help and the two Roman armies defeated the Ptolemaic soldiers in the second day of battle. No trace was found of young Ptolemy XII (47 B.C.).

Cleopatra reigned with her younger brother Ptolemy XIII, while Arsinoe was sent to Rome. Caesar left Egypt after a trip South as far as Ethiopia with Cleopatra. A son was born to Cleopatra and she named him *Caesarion* (June 47).

Cleopatra went to Caesar at Rome and dwelt in his properties, and had her son acknowledged by him. The Roman senators saw in Caesar's policy an imperialist tinge and could not accept an autocratic government and an "Egyptian queen". Brutus and his associates killed Caesar (44 B.C.).

Back in Egypt, Cleopatra poisoned Ptolemy XIII and combined with her her son Caesarion. The country was then in deep disintegration, Upper Egypt being practically deprived of a ruler. Cleopatra attempted to regain alexandrine sympathy by cancelling taxes.

The Roman world was divided between the Senate and the armies of Antonius and Octavius, of Cacsar's party, who finally won at Phillipi (42 B.C.). *Marcus Antonius* became ruler of the East and sent for Cleopatra and took her as concubine, living in luxury and killing her enemies. This caused the discontent of his family and Antonius left Egypt, reconciled with Octavius and married the latter's sister Octavia.

Two twins were born by Cleopatra from Antonius. Antonius did not return to the East until 36 B.C., when he fought the Parthians and sent for Cleopatra in Syria.

They visited their possessions as far as the Euphrates. Antonius had to go once more against the Parthians and Octavia sent to him, saying she was coming with help. Antonius bade her stop at Athens and this shock called for a war between Octavius and Antonius.

Antonius returned to Egypt, held festivities for a victory against Armenia, during which he and Cleopatra appeared in the luxurious pageantry of two oriental monarchs with Caesarion and the children of Antonius. When Antonius sent to divorce Octavia, her brother Octavius took by force Antonius' testament deposited at the Vestales' and waged war against him. The two



fleets met at Actium (31 B.C.). The 60 vessels of Cleopatra turned towards Alexandria, followed by Antonius.

Octavius entered Egypt through Pelusium and arrived at Alexandria. Cleopatra retired in a fortified building with two of her servants and sent word to Antonius, saying she had committed suicide. Antonius attempted to kill himself but failed and was brought in a bad state to Cleopatra. Meanwhile Octavius had entered victoriously in Alexandria (30 B.C.) and Cleopatra was found dead, with her two servants. Olympias related that she had committed suicide by means of an aspic's bite.

Caesarion was killed at the age of 18 and the three children of Antonius were sent to Octavia, who brought them up.

Egypt became a Roman province.

## THE ROMAN PERIOD

The Roman rule in Egypt lasted from 30 B.C. to 359 A.D. when the empire was divided into two parts and *Arcadius*, emperor of the East, governed Egypt.

The aim of the complicated Roman administration, with its control and compulsory services and charges, was to exact from this country as much as possible, disregarding the welfare of the people.

In the second century all eligible inhabitants had to fill liturgies (services), in turn, acting for three years and retiring for three others. Certain classes were exempted. The burden of liturgies ruined certain villages and Severus came to Egypt in 200 A.D. and reformed the government, establishing senates in the capitals of the nomes.

The charges were as heavy as had been the liturgies and the drain of wealth from the country to Rome led to complete deterioration, a state which Diocletian attempted to reform, at the end of the IIIrd century.

## THE GOVERNMENT

No immediate change occurred in the government of Egypt, a country which was to become the granary of Rome. On account of its difficult access, the country was considered as a separate unit with an autocratic government, to eliminate nationalistic rises.

**Central Administration.** — The high posts were given to the Romans appointed by the emperor, while the others were left to residents or natives. The head of the government was the *prefect*, who replaced the Ptolemaic king and had proconsular powers. He was responsible for the collection of taxes according to a total amount fixed by Rome, had judicial competence, inspected the country yearly and acted for unlimited periods.

His direct subordinates were the “*dikaiodotes*”, for judicial matters, the *idiologos* and *dioiketes* for finances, both of equal rank and having the same jurisdiction as the Ptolemaic *dioiketes* or minister of finances. *Procurators* served under them and supervised revenues and estates of temples.

The country was divided into three dioceses: the Thebaid, the Heptanomis with the Arsinoite nome and the Delta, each under an *epistrategos*, a civil official

who seems to have had his seat at Alexandria and had special authority in the appointment of liturgies and lower officials. Liturgies were offices to be filled compulsorily for a period of three years, and covered many activities.

**High Local Administration.** — The nome was governed by the *strategos*, usually a Greek who had all civil activities and served under the *epistrategos*. He organized the minor liturgies and corvée-work and had financial powers.

The *royal scribe* was independent of the *strategos*, and was specially concerned with finances. The *bibliophylakes* kept the records of the nome either for land or finances and seems to have been conscripted for work.

**Local Government of Villages.** — A *body of elders* represented the village and was responsible for payment of taxes, conscription of labourers and recruits, and for maintenance of peace. The liturgy was for one year. The government was represented by the *village-scribe* who drew up lists giving information about the village inhabitants. In the IIIrd century the old office of *komarch* was revived as a liturgy and two *komarchs* replaced the council of elders.

**Local Government of Towns.** — At the beginning, the town was under the *strategos* of the nome. Magistrates

were appointed annually in liturgies: the *gymnasiarch* in charge of the gymnasium, the *exegetes* or supervisor of the inhabitants' status, the *eutheniarch* for food supply, the *kosmetes* who trained the ephebes. A *scribe* represented the state.

In the IIIrd century, after the visit of Severus, these magistrates formed a senate who appointed and nominated the liturgies.

**Greek Cities.** — Alexandria, Naucratis, Ptolemais-Hermiou and the new city of Antinoopolis founded by Hadrian, were autonomous as in the Ptolemaic Period.

Alexandria had its senate cancelled by Augustus. The citizen enjoyed special privileges, the most important being that an Egyptian could attain Roman citizenship only through the Alexandrine citizenship. Strabo mentions the *exegetes*, the *hypomnematographos* and *archidikastes* for judicial matters and the night-officer or head of police.

The other cities retained their *senates* which they had under the Ptolemies.

**Taxation Officials.** — The distribution of taxes was done by the *idiologos* at Alexandria, helped by several local officials such as the *epikrites* and *laographos*, the *geometres* for surveying.

It seems that farming was still in use for collecting taxes. However a liturgist, the *praktores*, appears in

the reign of Tiberius as responsible for the collection. Each had one kind of taxes. The *trapezitai* or directors of public banks and the *sitologoi* or directors of the granaries had to verify the assessment of the taxes.

In the IIIrd. century *controllers of taxes* were appointed by the senate of the metropolis, two for each toparchy, helped by a nomarch and a toparch.

**Police.** — The Roman army was represented in the district by small pickets, helped by native guards. In the town, police were under the command of the strategos, but in villages, a special liturgist was responsible.

In the IIIrd century a new chief of police, the *nykto-strategos* appears in the towns.

**Finances.** — The main difference in the finances of the country is the disappearance of monopolies and custom-duties and the drainage of the wealth to be sent outside, at Rome. The system had accordingly changed from a balanced production and expenses inside the country to one of exacting money and products for the outer world.

The amount to be sent by Egypt was decided by the emperor and the prefect had to execute his orders through the strategoi and the villages' officials and senates.

**DIRECT TAXES.**—Corn was the most important of all products, exported to feed Rome. It was the result

of collecting the rents of domain-lands, but mainly of taxes on corn-land. Taxes on vine-yards and fruit-trees were paid in money to the *praktores*. The *apomoirā* was nationalized and still paid on these cultures.

Trades and industries were subject to taxes which varied according to their kinds, a system replacing the Ptolemaic monopolies.

Taxes on domestic animals: pigs, sheep, camels, were assessed according to registrations.

Egyptians had still to pay a poll-tax, lesser for Greeks; certain categories were exempted.

*INDIRECT TAXES.* — The *naubion* or charge paid instead of *corvée*-work by *katoichoi* and privileged owners is known. Asses and horses had to be licenced annually.

A *crown-tax*, inherited from the Ptolemies was due to the Roman emperors on their accessions to the throne at the beginning, then paid regularly in the second century, perhaps with relation to land owned.

Similarly statues for the emperors were paid from special taxes. Roman troops were also paid through taxes, the *annona* on land, collected in kind or money; clothes were furnished by weavers. *Requisitions* were made on beasts of transport and food for the army and officials during their travels.

*Custom duties* seem to have controlled the inner traffic with the Red Sea ports and on transit between

the Thebaid and Middle Egypt, at Hermoupolis, at caravan-stations, Coptos and in the Fayum.

The *enkylion* of 10 per cent was a tax on sale of property. Registration of documents was also subject to taxes. Salaries of officials were paid on special taxes.

*CHARGES*.—Egyptians had to maintain dykes and canals and work five days or pay an equivalent amount. Liturgies were offices to which the inhabitants could be nominated, receiving very low salaries unequal to the expenses.

## RELIGIONS

The native priesthood was subjected to regular supervision of the *idiologos* who was responsible for everything connected with the temples: management, regulations, sale of posts. The direct management was under a council of elders from the priests. The staff of the temple was composed of priests of several grades helped by attendants.

*NATIVE CULTS*.—Several cults were not influenced by Greek religion, such as those of Sebek, the crocodile-god at Fayum (*gr.* *Souchos*); Taourt, the hippopotamus-goddess at Oxyrrhincos (*gr.* *Thoueris*); the bulls Apis and Mnevis; Bes. Some deities were paralleled with



Greek ones such as Sebek with Chronos, Taourt with Athens, Ptah with Hephaistos, Thot with Hermes. Herakles, Horus with Apollo.

### GREEK CULTS

In some Greek centres there were purely Greek cults, not mixed with Egyptian ideas: Apollo at Hermoupolis, the dioskouroi, Zeus, Hera, Demeter. At Alexandria the chief deity was Serapis and his cult was quite Greek. His consort Isis retained much more Egyptian elements and became localized in the country, and Harpokrates, though of Egyptian origin, took the cults of all Horus-gods and others in the different cities.



Fig. 47—Mummy-Portrait  
(Roman Period)

**ROMAN CULTS.**—Two deities are known: Jupiter Capitolinus at Arsinoe and emperor-worship in different cities.

*JEWES* had their synagogues in main towns and developed the sect of Therapeutai leading a monastic life in the Mareotis, a creation quite original to Egypt.

*CHRISTIANITY*.—Developed rapidly in the second century, although it was subject to the emperors' persecutions under Severus, Decius, Valerian. The most cruel was that of Diocletian who ordered the demolition of churches, and the year of this emperor's accession to the throne is kept by the Copts as the beginning of their "Era of the Martyrs".

Constantine proclaimed Christianity the official religion and a movement against paganism was encouraged by fanatical monks who destroyed temples and killed their priesthood. Many heresies and divisions occurred in Egyptian Christianity, probably due to the mixed elements of its followers. Egypt saw also the creation of eremitic and ascetic life, in the numerous deserts skirting the valley and which developed into monasticism.

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